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“IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.”

A MATTER OF FACT ROMANCE.

BY

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AUTHOR OF

“CHRISTIE JOHNSTONE,” “PEG WOFFINGTON,” ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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‘IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.’

A MATTER OF FACT ROMANCE.

CHAPTER I.

It was a bright morning. The world awoke. The working Englishman, dead drunk at the public-house over-night, had got rid of two-thirds of his burning poison by help of man’s chief nurse, sleep; and now he must work off the rest, grumbling at this the kind severity of his lot. Warm men, respectable men, amongst whom justices of the peace and other voluptuous disciplinarians, were tempted out of delicious beds by the fragrant berry, the balmy leaf, snowy damask, fire glowing behind polished bars—in short, by multifarious grub set in a frame of gold. They came down.

‘How did you sleep, dear sir?’

‘Pretty well’ said one with a doubtful air.

‘Scarce closed my eyes all night’ snarled another.

Another had been awake by the barking of a dog,

and it was full half an hour before he could lose the sense of luxurious ease in unconsciousness again. He made an incident of this, and looked round the table for sympathy, and obtained it, especially from such as were toadies.

Now all these had slept as much as nature required. No. 1 like a top, *ar hyd y nos parvυχιον*—like a top. No. 2 eight hours out of the nine. The ninth his sufferings had been moderate; they had been confined to this—a bitter sense of two things; first, that he was lying floating in a sea of comforts; secondly, that the moment he should really need sleep sleep was at his service.

In —— Gaol, governor, turnkeys, chaplain, having had something to do the day before, slept among Class 1, and now turned out of their warm beds as they had turned into them, without a shade of anxiety or even recollection of him whom they had left last evening at eight to pass the livelong night in a sponge upon a stone.

Up rose refreshed with sleep that zealous officer Hawes. He was in the prison at daybreak, and circulated with inspecting eye all through it. Went into the kitchen—saw the gruel making—docked Josephs and three more of half their allowance; then into the corridors, where on one of the snowy walls he found a speck; swore; had it instantly removed. Thence into the labor-yard, and prepared a crank for an athletic prisoner by secretly introducing a weight, and so making the poor crank a story-teller, and the prologue to punishment. Returning to the body of the

prison he called out “prisoners on the list for hard labor to be taken to the yard.”

He was not answered with the usual alacrity, and looked up to repeat his summons, when he observed a cell open and two turnkeys standing in earnest conversation at the door. He mounted the stairs in great heat.

‘What are you all humbugging there for, and why does not that young rascal turn out to work? I’ll physic him, —— him!’

The turnkeys looked in their chief’s face with a strange expression of stupid wonder. Hawes caught this—his wrath rose higher.

‘What d’ye stand staring at me like stuck pigs for? Come out, No. 15. —— you all! why don’t you bring him out to the crank?’

Hodges answered gloomily from the cell, ‘Come and bring him yourself, if you can.’

At such an address from a turnkey, Hawes, who had now mounted the last stair, gave a snort of surprise and wrath—then darted into the cell threatening the most horrible vengeance on the bones and body of poor Josephs, threats which he confirmed with a tremendous oath. But to that oath succeeded a sudden dead stupid staring silence; for running fiercely into the cell with rage in his face, threats and curses on his tongue, he had almost stumbled over a corpse.

It lay in the middle of the cell—stark and cold, but peaceful. Hawes stood over it. If he had not stopped short his foot would have been upon it. His mouth

opened but no sound came. He stood paralyzed. A greater than he was in that cell, and he was dumb. He looked up—Hodges and Fry were standing silent looking down on the body. Fry was grave: Hodges trembled. Part of a handkerchief fluttered from the bar of the window. A knife had severed it. The other fragment lay on the floor near the body where Hodges had dropped it. Hawes took this in at a glance, and comprehended it all. This was not the first or second prisoner that had escaped him by a similar road. For a moment his blood froze in him. He wished to heaven he had not been so severe upon the poor boy.

It was but for a moment. The next he steeled himself in the tremendous egotism that belongs to and makes the deliberate manslayer.

'The young viper has done this to spite me' said he. And he actually cast a look of petulant anger down.

At this precise point the minds that had borne his company so long began to part from it. Fry looked in his face with an expression bordering on open contempt, and Hodges shoved rudely by him and left the cell.

Hodges leaned over the corridor in silence. One of the inferior turnkeys asked him a question dictated by curiosity about the situation in which he had found the body. 'Don't speak to me!' was the fierce wild answer. And he looked with a stupid wild stare over the railings.

So wild and white and stricken was this man's face that Evans, who was exchanging some words with a gentleman on the basement floor, happening to catch sight of it, interrupted himself and hallooed from below, ‘What is there anything the matter Hodges?’ Hodges made no reply. The man seemed to have lost his speech for some time past.

‘Let us go and see,’ said the gentleman; and he ascended the steps somewhat feebly, accompanied by Evans.

‘What is it Hodges?’

‘What is it,’ answered the man impatiently. ‘Go in there and you will see what it is!’

‘I don't like this sir,’ said Evans. ‘Oh! I am fearful there is something unfortunate has happened. You mustn't come in sir. You stay here, and I'll go in and see. He entered the cell.

Meantime a short conference had passed between Hawes and Fry.

‘This is a bad business Fry.’

‘And no mistake.’

‘Had you any idea of this?’

‘No! can't say I had.

‘If the parson ever gets well he will make this a handle to ruin you and me.’

‘Me sir! I only obey orders.’

‘That won't save you. If they get the better of me you will suffer along with me.’

‘I shouldn't wonder. I told you you were carrying it too far, but you wouldn't listen to me.’

'I was wrong Fry. I ought to have listened to you, for you are the only one that is faithful to me in the gaol.'

'I know my duty sir, and I try to do it.'

'What are we to do with him Fry?'

'Well I don't think he ought to lie on the floor. I'd let him have his bed now I think.'

'You are right. I'll send for it. Ah! here is Evans. Go for No. 15's bed.'

Evans standing at the door had caught but a glimpse of the object that lay on the floor, but that glimpse was enough. He went out and said to Hodges, 'Wasn't it you that took Josephs' bed away last night?' The man cowered under the question. 'Well you are to go and fetch it back the governor says.' Hodges went away for it without a word. Evans returned to the cell. He came and kneeled down by Josephs and laid his hand upon him. I feared it! I feared it!' said he. 'Why he has been dead a long time. Ah! your reverence, why did you come in when I told you not. Poor Josephs is no more sir.'

Mr. Eden, who had already saluted Mr. Hawes with grave politeness, though without any affectation of good will, came slowly up, and sinking his voice to a whisper in presence of death said in pitiful accents, 'Poor child! he was always sickly. Six weeks ago I feared we should lose him, but he seemed to get better.' He was now kneeling beside him. 'Was he long ill sir?' asked he of Hawes. 'Probably he was, for he is much wasted. I can feel all his bones.' Hardened as they

were Hawes and Fry looked at one another in some confusion. Presently Mr. Eden started back. ‘Why what is this? he is wet. He is wet from head to foot. What is the cause of this? Can you tell me Mr. Hawes?’

Mr. Hawes did not answer, but Evans did.

‘I am afraid it is the bucket your reverence. They soused him in the yard late last night.’

‘Did they?’ said Mr. Eden, looking the men full in the face. ‘Then they have the more to repent of this morning. But stay. Why then he was not under the doctor’s hands Evans?’

‘La! bless you, no sir. He was harder worked and worse fed than any man in the gaol.’

‘At work last night! Then at what hour did he die? He is stiff and cold. This is a very sudden death. Did any one see this boy die?’

The men gave no answer, but the last words—‘Did any one see this boy die?’ seemed to give Evans a new light.

‘No!’ he cried. ‘No one saw him die. Look here sir. See what is dangling from the window—his handkerchief.’

‘And this mark round his throat Evans. He has destroyed himself.’ And Mr. Eden recoiled from the corpse.

‘Oh! you may forgive him sir,’ said Evans. ‘We should all have done the same. No human creature could live the life they led him. Who could live upon bread and water and punishment? It is a sorrowful

sight, but it is a happy release for him sir. Eh! poor lad,' said Evans laying his hand upon the body; 'I liked thee well, but I am glad thou art gone. Thou hast escaped away from worse trouble.'

'Come, it is no use snivelling Evans,' put in Hawes. 'I am as sorry for this job as you are. But who would have thought he was so determined? He gave us no warning.'

'Don't you believe that sir,' cried Evans to Mr. Eden. 'He gave them plenty of warning. I heard him with my own ears tell you you were killing him; not a day for the last fortnight he did not tell you so Mr. Hawes.'

'Well I didn't believe him you see.'

'You mean you didn't care.'

'Hold your tongue Evans! You are disrespectful. How dare you speak to me, you insolent dog? Hold your tongue!'

'No sir, I won't hold my tongue over this dead body.'

'Be silent Evans,' said Mr. Eden. 'This is no place for disputes. Evans, my heart is broken. While there is life there is hope; but here, what hope is there? Many in this place live in crime, but this one has died in crime; he of whom I had such good hopes has died in crime—died by his own hand; he has murdered his own soul; my heart is broken!—my heart is broken!' The good man's anguish was terrible.

Evans consoled him. 'Don't go on so, sir! pray

don't. Josephs is where none of us but you, sir, shall ever get to; he is in heaven as sure as we are upon earth. He was the best lad in the place; there wasn't a drop of gall in him; who ever heard a bad word from him? and he did not kill himself, till he found he was to die whether or no; so then he shortened his own death-struggle, and he was right.'

'I don't understand you.'

'I dare say not sir; but those two understand me. Oh it is no use to look black at me now, Mr. Hawes; I shall speak my mind though my head was to be cut off. I have been a coward; I thought too much of my wife and children; but I am a man now. Eh! poor lad, thou shan't be maligned now thou art dead, as well as tormented alive. Sir,—he that lies here so pale and calm, was not guilty of self-destruction. He was driven to death!—don't speak to me, sir, but look at me, and hear the truth, as it will come out the day all of us in this cell are damned, except you—and him!'

The man fell suddenly on his knees, took the dead boy's hand in his left hand, and held his right up, and in this strange attitude, which held all his hearers breathless, he poured out a terrible tale.

His boiling heart, and the touch of him, whom now too late he defended like a man, gave him simple but real eloquence, and in few words, that scalded as they fell, he told as powerfully as I have feebly by what road Josephs had been goaded to death.

He brought the dark tale down to where he left the sufferer rolled up in the one comfort left him on earth,

his bed; and then turning suddenly, and leaving Josephs, he said sternly—

'And now, sir, ask the governor where is the bed I wrapped the wet boy up in, *for it isn't here.*'

'You know as much as I do!' was Hawes's sulky reply.

But at this moment Hodges came into the cell with the bed in question in his arms.

'There is his bed' cried he, 'and what is the use of it now? If you had left it him last night it would be better for him and for me too,'—and he flung the bed on the floor.

'Oh! it was you took it from him, was it?' said Evans.

'Well, I am here to obey orders, Jack Evans; do you do nothing but what you like in this place?'

'Let there be no disputing in presence of death!'

'No, sir.'

'One thing only is worth knowing or thinking of now; whether there is hope for this our brother, in that world to which he has passed all unprepared. Hodges, you saw him last alive!'

Hodges groaned. 'I saw him last at night, and first in the morning.'

'I entreat you to remember all that passed at night between you!'

'Then cover up his face, it draws my eyes to it.'

Mr. Eden covered the dead face gently with his handkerchief.

'Mr. Hawes met me in the corridor and sent me to take away his bed. I found him dozing, and I took—I did what I was ordered.'

Mr. Eden sighed.

‘Tell me what *he* said and did.’

‘Well sir! when I showed him the order, “fourteen days without bed and gas,” he bursts out a laughing—’

‘Good heavens!’

‘And says he “I don’t say for gas, but you tell Mr. Hawes I shan’t be without bed nothing nigh so long as that.”’

Mr. Eden and Evans exchanged a meaning glance; so did Fry and Hawes.

‘Then I said “No! I shan’t tell Mr. Hawes anything to make him punish you any more, because you are punished too much as it is” says I—’

‘I am glad you said that. But tell me what *he* said. Did he complain; did he use angry or bitter words?—you make me drag it out of you.’

‘No! he didn’t! He wasn’t one of that sort! The next thing was, he asked me to give him my hand. Well, I was surprised like at his asking for my hand, and I doing him such an ill-turn. So then he said, “Mr. Hodges,” says he, “why not? I never took away your bed from under you, so you can give me your hand, if I can give you mine.”’

‘Oh! what a beautiful nature! Ah! these are golden words. I hope for the credit of human nature you gave him your hand?’

‘Why, of course I did, sir. I had no malice; it was ignorance, and owing to being so used to obey the governor.’

Here Mr. Hawes, who had remained quiet all this

time, now absorbed in his own reflections, now listening sullenly to these strange scenes in which the dead boy seemed for a time to have eclipsed his importance, burst angrily in,

'I have listened patiently to you Mr. Eden, to see how far you would go ; but I see if I wait till you leave off undermining me with my servants, I may wait a long while.'

Mr. Eden turned round impatiently.

'You! who thinks of you or such as you in presence of such a question as lies here. I am trying to learn the fate of this immortal soul ; and I did not see you or think of you or notice you were here.'

'That is polite ! Well sir, the governor is somebody in most gaols, but it seems he is to be nobody here so long as you are in it, and that won't be long. Come Fry, we have other duties to attend to.' So saying he and his lieutenant went out of the cell.

Hodges went too, but not with them.

The moment they were gone—'Well sir,' burst out Evans, 'don't you see that the real murderer is not that stupid ignorant owl Hodges?'—

'Hush ! Evans! this is no time or place for unkindly thoughts ; thank heaven that you are free from their guilt, and leave me alone with *him*.'

He was left alone with the dead.

Evans looked through the peep-hole of the cell an hour later. He was still on his knees fearing hoping vowing, and above all praying, beside the dead.

CHAPTER II.

MR. EDEN when he reappeared in the prison was sallow and his limbs feeble, but his fatal disease was baffled, and a few words are due to explain how this happened. The Malvern doctor came back with Susan within twenty hours of her departure. She ushered him into Mr. Eden's room with blushing joy and pride.

The friends shook hands, Mr. Eden thanked him for coming, and the doctor cut him short by demanding an accurate history of his disorder, and the remedies that had been applied. Mr. Eden related the rise and progress of his complaint, and meantime the doctor solved the other query by smelling a battalion of empty phials.

‘ The old story ’ said he with a cheerful grin. ‘ You were weak, therefore they give you things to weaken you. You could not put so much nourishment as usual into your body, therefore they have been taking strength out. Lastly, the coats of your stomach being irritated by your disorder, they have raked it like blazes. This is the mill-round of the old medicine; from irritation to inflammation, from inflammation to mortification and decease of the patient. Now instead

of irritating the irritated spot, suppose we try a little counter irritation.'

'With all my heart.'

The doctor then wetted a towel with cold water, wrung it half dry, and applied it to Mr. Eden's stomach.

This experiment he repeated four times with a fresh towel at intervals of twenty minutes. He had his bed made in Mr. Eden's room.

'Tell me if you feel feverish.'

Towards morning Mr. Eden tossed and turned, and the doctor rising found him dry and hot and feverish. Then he wetted two towels, took the sheets off his own bed, and placed one wet towel on a blanket; then he made his patient strip naked and lie down on this towel, which reached from the nape of his neck to his loins.

'Ah!' cried Mr. Eden 'horrible!'

Then he put the other towel over him in front.

'Ugh! That is worse; you are a bold man with your remedies. I shiver to the bone.'

'You won't shiver long.'

He laid hold of one edge of the blanket and pulled it over him with a strong quick pull, and tucked it under him. The same with the other side; and now Mr. Eden was in a blanket prison. A regular strait waistcoat. His arms pinned to his sides. Two more blankets were placed loosely over him.

'Mighty fine, doctor, but suppose a fly or a gnat should settle on my face?'

'Call me and I'll take him off.'

In about three quarters of an hour Dr. Gulson came to his bed-side again.

‘How are you now?’

‘In Elysium.’

‘Are you shivering?’

‘Nothing of the kind.’

‘Are you hot?’

‘Nothing of the sort. I am Elysian. Please retreat. Let no mere mortals approach. Come not near our fairy king,’ murmured the sick man. ‘I am Oberon, slumbering on tepid roses in the garden, whence I take my name,’ purred our divine, mixing a creed or two.

‘Well you must come out of this paradise for the present.’

‘You wouldn’t be such a monster as to propose it.’

Spite of his remonstrances he was unpacked, rubbed dry and returned to his own bed, where he slept placidly till nine o’clock. The next day fresh applications of wet cloths to the stomach, and in the evening one of the doctor’s myrmidons arrived from Malvern. The doctor gave him full and particular instructions.

The next morning Mr. Eden was packed again. He delighted in the operation, but remonstrated against the term.

‘Packed!’ said he to them; ‘is that the way to speak of a Paridisaical process under which fever and sorrow fly and calm complacency steals over mind and body?’

A slight diminution of all the unfavorable symptoms and a great increase of appetite relieved the

doctor's anxiety so far that he left him under White's charge. So was the myrmidon called.

'Do not alter your diet, it is simple and mucilaginous, but increase the quantity by degrees.'

He postponed his departure till midnight.

Up to the present time he had made rather light of the case, and as for danger he had pooh-poohed it with good-humored contempt. Just before he went he said,

'Well Frank I don't mind telling you now that I am very glad you sent for me, and I'll tell you why.—Forty-eight hours more of irritating medicines, and no human skill could have saved your life.'

'Ah! my dear friend, you are my good angel, you can have no conception how valuable my life is.'

'Oh yes I can!'

'And you have saved that life. Yes! I am weak still, but I feel I shall live. You have cured me.'

'In popular language I have, but between ourselves nobody ever cures anybody. Nature cures all that are cured. But I patted Nature on the back; the others hit her over the head with bludgeons and brick-bats.'

'And now you are going. I must not keep you or I shall compromise other lives. Well go and fulfil your mission. But first think, is there any thing I can do in part return for such a thing as this, old friend?'

'Only one that I can think of. Out-live me, old friend.'

A warm and tender grasp of the hand on this, and

the Malvern doctor jumped into a fly, and the railway soon whirled him into Worcestershire.

His myrmidon remained behind and carried out his chief's orders with inflexible severity unsoftened by blandishments unshaken by threats.

In concert with Susan he closed the door upon all harassing communications.

One day Evans came to tell the invalid how the prisoners were maltreated. Susan received him, wormed from him his errand, and told him Mr. Eden was too ill to see him, which was what my French brethren call *une sainte mensonge*—I a fib.

A slow but steady cure was effected by these means : applications of water in various ways to the skin, simple diet, and quiet. A great appetite soon came ; he ate twice as much as he had before the new treatment, and would have eaten twice as much as he did but the myrmidon would not let him. Whenever he was feverish the myrmidon packed him, and in half an hour the fever was gone. His cheeks began to fill, his eyes to clear and brighten, only his limbs could not immediately recover their strength.

As he recovered, his anxiety to be back among his prisoners increased daily, but neither Susan nor the myrmidon would hear of it. They acted in concert, and stuck at nothing to cure their patient. They assured him all was going on well in the prison. They meant well ; but for all that every lie great or small is the brink of a precipice, the depth of which nothing but Omniscience can fathom.

He believed them yet he was uneasy, and this uneasiness increased with his returning strength. At last one morning happening to awake earlier than usual, he stole a march on his nurses, and taking his stick walked out and tottered into the gaol.

He found Josephs dead under the fangs of Hawes, and the whole prison groaning.

Now the very day his symptoms became more favorable, it so happened that he had received a few lines from the Home Office, that had perhaps aided his recovery by the hopes they inspired.

'The matter of your last communication is forwarded to the "Inspector of Prisons." He is instructed to inquire strictly into your statements and report to this office.'

The short note concluded with an intimation that the tone in which Mr. Eden had conveyed his remonstrances was intemperate, out of place, and WITHOUT PRECEDENT.

Mr. Eden was rejoiced.

The "Inspector of Prisons" was a salaried officer of the Crown enlightened by a large comparison of many prisons, and, residing at a distance, was not open to the corrupting influences of association and personal sympathy with the governor as were the county magistrates.

Day after day Mr. Eden rose in hope that day would not pass without the promised visit from the "Inspector of Prisons." Day after day no inspector. At last Mr. Eden wrote to him to inquire when he was coming.

The letter travelled about after him, and after a considerable delay came his answer. It was to this effect. That he was instructed to examine into charges made against the governor of —— gaol; but that he had no instructions to make an irregular visit for that purpose. His progress would bring him this year to —— gaol in six weeks’ time, when he should act on his instructions, but these did not justify him in varying from the routine of his circuit.

Six weeks is not long to wait for help in a matter of life and death thought the eighty pounders the clerks who execute England.

Three days of this six weeks had scarce elapsed, when two prisoners were driven a step each farther than their wretched fellow-sufferers who were to follow them in a week or two. Of these, one, ‘a mild quiet docile boy’ was driven to self-slaughter; and another one of the best-natured rogues in the place was driven to manslaughter.

This latter incident Mr. Eden prevented. I will presently relate how; it was not by postponing his interference for six weeks.

When Mr. Eden rose from his knees besides the slaughtered boy he went home at once, and wrote to the Home Secretary. On the envelope he wrote ‘private,’ and inside to this effect—

‘Two months ago I informed you officially that prisoners are daily assaulted, starved, and maltreated to the danger of their lives by the governor of —— gaol. I demanded of you an inquiry on the spot. In reply

you evaded my demand, and proposed to refer me to the visiting justices.

'In answer I declined these men for referees on two grounds, viz. that I had lodged an appeal with a higher jurisdiction than theirs, and that they were confederates of the criminal; and to enforce the latter objection I included your proposed referees in my charges, and once more demanded of you in the Queen's name an examination of her unworthy servants on the instant and on the spot.

'On this occasion I warned you in these words—

'“Here are 180 souls, to whose correction, care, and protection the State is pledged. No one of these lives is safe a single day; and for every head that falls from this hour I hold you responsible to God and the State.”

'Surely these were no light words, yet they fell light on you.

'In answer you promised us the “Inspector of Prisons,” but you gave him no instructions to come to us. You fooled away time when time was human life. Read once more my words of warning, and then read these—

'This morning a boy of fifteen was done to death by Mr. Hawes. Of his death you are not guiltless. You were implored to prevent it, you could have prevented it, and you did not prevent it. The victim of gaol cruelty, and of the maladministration in government offices, lies dead in his cell.

'In three days I shall commit his body to the dust;

but his memory never until he is avenged, and those who are in process of being murdered like him receive the protection of the State.

‘If in the three days between this boy’s murder and his burial your direct representative and agent does not come here and examine this gaol and sift the acts of those who govern it, on the fourth day I lay the whole case before her Majesty the Queen and the British nation, by publishing it in all the journals. Then I shall tell her Majesty that, having thrice appealed in vain to her representatives, I am driven to appeal to herself; with this I shall print the evidence I have thrice offered you of this gaoler’s felonies and their sanguinary results. That Lady has a character; one of its strong, unmistakeable features is a real, tender, active humanity.

‘I read characters; it is a part of my business; and believe me, this Lady once informed of the crimes done in her name will repudiate and abhor alike her hireling’s cruelty and her clerks’ and secretaries’ indifference to suffering and slaughter. Nor will the public hear unmoved the awful tale. Shame will be showered on all connected with these black deeds, even on those who can but be charged with conniving at them.

‘To be exposed to national horror on the same column with the greatest felon in England would be a cruel position, a severe punishment for a man of honour, whose only fault perhaps is that he has mistaken an itch for eminence for a capacity for business,

and so serves the State without comprehending it. But what else can I do? I too serve the State, and I comprehend what I owe it, and the dignity with which it intrusts me, and the deep responsibility it lays on me. I therefore cannot assent to future felonies any more than I have to past and present, but must stop them, and will stop them—how I can.

‘So, sir, I offer you the post of honour or a place of shame. Choose! for three whole days you have the choice. Choose! and may God enlighten you and forgive me for waiting these three days.

‘I have the honour to be,

‘&c. &c.’

To this letter, whose tone was more eccentric, more flesh and blood, and WITHOUT PRECEDENT than the last, came an answer in a different hand from the others.

‘—— acknowledged receipt of the chaplain’s letter.

‘Since a human life has succumbed under the discipline of —— gaol, an inquiry follows immediately as a matter of course. The other inducements you have held out are comparatively weak and something more than superfluous. How far they are in good taste will be left to your own cooler consideration. A person connected with the Home Department will visit your gaol with large powers soon after you receive this.

‘He is instructed to avail himself of your zeal and knowledge.

‘Be pleased to follow this course. Select for him the plainer facts of your case. If on the face of the business he sees ground for deeper inquiry, a commission will sit upon the gaol, and meanwhile all suspected officers will be suspended. You will consider yourself still in direct correspondence with this office, but it is requested, on account of the mass of matter daily submitted to us, that your communications may be confined to facts, and those stated as concisely as possible.’

On reading this Mr. Eden coloured with shame as well as pleasure. ‘How gentleman-like all this is!’ thought he. ‘How calm and superior to me who, since I had the jaundice, am always lowering my office by getting into a heat! And I to threaten this noble, dignified creature with “The Times.” I am thoroughly ashamed of myself. Yet what could I do? I had tried everything short of bullying and failed. But I now suspect —— never saw my two first letters. Doubtless the rotten system of our public offices is more to blame than this noble fellow.’

Thus accusing himself Mr. Eden returned with somewhat feeble steps to the gaol. One of the first prisoners he visited was Thomas Robinson. He found that prisoner in the attitude of which he thought he had cured him, coiled up like a snake, moody and wretched. The man turned round with a very bad expression on his face, which soon gave way to a look of joy. He uttered a loud exclamation, and springing

unguardedly up, dropped a brickbat which rolled towards Mr. Eden and nearly hit him. Robinson looked confused, and his eyes rose and fell from Mr. Eden's face to the brickbat.

'How do you do?'

'Not so well as before you fell ill, sir. It has been hard times with us poor fellows since we lost you.'

'I fear it has.'

'You have just come back in time to save a life or two. There is a boy called Josephs. I hope the day won't go over without your visiting him, for they are killing him by inches.'

'How do you know that?'

'I heard him say so.'

Mr. Eden groaned.

'You look pale, my poor fellow.'

'I shall be better now,' replied the thief, looking at him affectionately.

'What is this?'

'This, sir—what, sir?'

'This brick?'

'Well! why, it is a brick, sir!'

'Where did you get it?'

'I found it in the yard.'

'What were you going to do with it?'

'Oh! I wasn't going to do any ill with it.'

'Then why that guilty look when you dropped it. Come now I am in no humour to be hard upon you. Were you going to make some more cards?'

'Now, sir, didn't I promise you I never would do

that again;' and Robinson wore an aggrieved look.

'Would I break a promise I made to you?'

'What was it for then?'

'Am I bound to criminate myself, your reverence?'

'Certainly not to your enemy! but to your friend, and to him who has the care of your soul—yes!'

'Let me ask you a question first sir. Which is worth most, one life or twenty?'

'Twenty.'

'Then if by taking one life you can save twenty it is a good action to put that one out of the way?'

'That does not necessarily follow.'

'Oh! doesn't it? I thought it did. There's a man in this prison that murders men wholesale. I thought if I could any way put it out of his power to kill any more what a good action it would be!'

'A good action! so then this brick—'

'Was for Hawes's scull, your reverence.'

'This then is the fruit of all my teaching. You will break my heart amongst you.'

'Don't say so, sir! pray don't say so! I won't touch a hair of his head now you are alive; but I thought you were dead or dying, so what did it matter then what I did? Besides, I was driven into a corner, I could only kill that scoundrel or let him kill me. But you are alive, and you will find some way of saving my life as well as his.'

'I will try. But first abandon all thoughts of lawless revenge. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord." Come, promise me.'

'Now sir, is it likely I would offend you for the pleasure of dirtying my fingers with that rascal's blood. Don't let such a lump of dirt as him make mischief between you and me, sir.'

'I understand! with you any unchristian sentiment is easily driven out—by another. Hatred is to give way to contempt.'

'No, sir, but you are alive, and I don't think of Hawes now one way or other, with such scum as that out of sight is out of mind. When did you begin to get better, sir? and are you better? and shall I see your blessed face in my cell every day as I used.' And the water stood in the thief's eyes.

Mr. Eden smiled and sighed. 'Your mind is like an eel, Heaven help the man that tries to get hold of it to do it any lasting good. You and I must have a good pray together some day.'

'Ah! your reverence, that would do me good soul and body,' said Mr. Supple.

'Let me now feel your pulse; it is very low. What is the matter?'

'Starvation, overwork, and solitude; I feel myself sinking.'

'If I could amuse your mind.'

'Even you could hardly do that, sir.'

'Hum! I have brought you a quire of paper and one of Mr. Gillott's swan-quill pens and a penny ink-bottle.'

'What for?'

'You are to write a story.'

'But I never wrote one in my life.'

'Then this will be the first.'

'Oh, I'll try, sir. I've tried a hundred things in my life and they none of them proved so hard as they looked. What kind of story?'

'The only kind of story that is worth a button—a true story—the story of Thomas Robinson alias Scott, alias Lyon, alias etc.'

'Then you should have brought a ream instead of a quire.'

'No! I want to read it when it is written. Now write the truth—do not dress or cook your facts, I shall devour them raw with twice the relish, and they will do you ten times the good. And intersperse no humbug, no sham penitence. When your own life lies thus spread out before you like a map, you will find you regret many things you have done, and view others with calmer and wiser eyes; for self-review is a healthy process. Write down these honest reflections, these will be medicine to your mind, but don't overdo it—don't write a word you don't feel. It will amuse you while you are at it.'

'That it will.'

'It will interest me more than the romance of a carpet writer who never saw life, and it may do good to other prisoners.'

'I want to begin.'

'I know you do, creature of impulses! Let me feel your pulse again. Ah! it has gained about ten.'

'Ten, your reverence. Fifty you mean. It is you

for putting life into a poor fellow and keeping him from despair. It is not the first time you have saved me. The devil hates you more than all the other parsons, for you are as ingenious in good as he is in mischief.'

In the midst of this original eulogy Mr. Eden left the cell somewhat suddenly with an aching heart, for the man's words reminded him that for all his skill and zeal a boy of fifteen years lay dead of despair hard by. He went, but he left two good things behind him ; occupation and hope.

CHAPTER III.

THE inexperienced in gaols would take for granted that the death of Josephs gave Mr. Hawes's system a fatal check. No such thing. He was staggered. So was Pharaoh staggered several times, yet he always recovered himself in twenty-four hours. Hawes did not take so long as that. A suicide was no novelty under his system. Six hours after he found his victim dead he had a man and a boy crucified in the yard, swore horribly at Fry who for the first time in his life was behind time, and tore out of his hands "Uncle Tom." which was the topic that had absorbed Fry and made him two minutes behind him ; went home and wrote a note to his friend Williams informing him of the suicide that had taken place, and reflecting severely upon Josephs for his whole conduct, with which this last offence against discipline was in strict accordance. Then he had his grog, and having nothing to do he thought he would see what was that story which had prevailed so far over the stern realities of system as to derange that piece of clockwork that went by the name of Fry. He yawned over the first pages, but as the

master hand unrolled the great chromatic theory he became absorbed and devoured this great human story till his candles burned down in their sockets and sent him to bed four hours later than usual.

The next morning soon after chapel a gentleman's servant rode up to the gaol and delivered a letter for Mr. Hawes. It was from Justice Williams. That worthy expressed in polysyllables his sorrow at the death of Josephs after this fashion :—

‘A circumstance of this kind is always to be deplored, since it gives occasion to the enemies of the system to cast reflections which, however unphilosophical and malignant, prejudice superficial judgments against our salutary discipline.’

He then went on to say that the visiting justices would be at the gaol the next day at one o'clock to make their usual report, in which Mr. Hawes might be sure his zeal and fidelity would not pass unnoticed. He concluded by saying that Mr. Hawes must on that occasion present his charges against the chaplain in a definite form, and proceedings would be taken on the spot.

‘Aha! aha! So I shall get rid of him. Confound him! he makes me harder upon the beggars than I should be. Fry, put these numbers on the cranks and bring me your report after dinner.’

With these words Mr. Hawes vanished, and to the infinite surprise of the turnkeys was not seen in the gaol for many hours. At two o'clock, as he was still not in the prison, Fry went to his house. He found Mr. Hawes deep in a book.

‘Brought the report sir.’

‘Give it to me. Humph! No. 40 and 45 refractory at the crank. No. 65 caught getting up to his window; says he wanted to feel the light. 65—that is one of the boys isn’t?’

‘Yes sir.’

‘How old is the young varmint?’

‘Eleven sir.’

‘No. 14 heard to speak to a prisoner that was leaving the gaol, his term being out. What did he say to him?’

‘Said “Good-bye! God bless you!”’

‘I’ll shut his mouth. Confound the beggars! how fond they are of talking. I think they would rather go without their food than without their jaw.’

‘No. 19 caught writing a story. It is that fellow Robinson, one of the parson’s men. I’ll write something on his skin. How did he get the things to write with?’

‘Chaplain gave them him.’

‘Ah! I am glad of that. You brought them away of course?’

‘Yes sir, here they are. He made a terrible fuss about parting with them.’

‘What did he say?’

‘He said heaven was to judge between me and him.’

‘Blaspheming dog! —— him! I’ll break him. What else?’

“Get out of my sight” said he “for fear I do you a mischief.” So then down he pops on his knees in a

corner and turns his back on me, like an ignorant brute as he is.'

'Never mind, Fry, I'll break him.'

'I suppose we shall see you in the prison soon, shan't we, sir? The place looks strange to me without you.'

'By-and-bye—by-and-bye. This confounded book sticks to me like a leech. How far had you got when you lent it me?'

'Got just to the most interesting part' said Fry dolefully, 'where he comes under a chap called Legree; and then you took it away.'

'Well, you'll have it again as soon as I have done with it. I say, what do you think of this book? is it true do you think?'

'Oh! it is true—I'd take my oath of that.'

'Why how do you know?'

'Because it reads like true.'

'That is no rule ye fool.'

'Well sir what do you think?'

This question staggered Hawes for a moment. However he assumed an oracular look, and replied, 'I think some of it is true and some isn't.'

'Do you think it is true about their knocking down blackee in one lot, and his wife in another, and sending 'em a thousand miles apart?'

'Oh, that is true enough! I dare say.'

'And running them down with blood-hounds?'

'Why not; they look upon the poor devils as beasts.'

If you tell a Yankee a nigger is a man, he thinks you are poking fun at him.’

‘It is a cursed shame!’

‘Of course it is! but I’ll tell you what I can’t swallow in this book. Hem! did you ever fall in with any Yankees?’

‘One or two, sir.’

‘Were they green at all?’

‘That they weren’t. They were rather foxy I should say.’

‘Rather: why one of them would weather upon any three Englishmen that ever were born. Now here is a book that as good as tells me it is a Yankee custom to disable their beasts of burden. Gammon! they can’t afford to do it. I believe,’ continued this candid personage (who had never been in any of the States), ‘they are the cruellest set on the face of the earth, but then they are the ’cutest (that is their own word), and they are a precious sight too ’cute to disable the beast that carries the grist to the mill.’

‘Doesn’t seem likely now you put it to me.’

‘Have a glass of grog Fry.’

‘Thank you sir.’

‘And there is the paper. Run your eye over it and don’t speak to me for ten minutes, for I must see how Tom gets on under this bloody-minded heathen.’

Fry read the paper; but although he moistened it with a glass of grog, he could not help casting envious glances from his folio at Mr. Hawes’s duodecimo.

Fibs mixed with truth charm us more than truth mixed with fibs.

Presently an oath escaped from Mr. Hawes—

‘Sir!’

‘Nothing, it is only this infernal—humph!’

Presently another expletive: ‘I’ll tell you what it is, Fry, if somebody doesn’t knock this thundering Legree on the head, I’ll put the book on the fire.’

‘Well, but if it isn’t true, sir?’

‘But it is true every word of it while you are reading it ye fool. What heathens there are in the world! First they sell a child out of his mother’s arms. She cuts sooner than be parted. They hunt her and come up with her; but she knows what they are, and trusts her life and the child to one of their great thundering frozen rivers as broad as the British channel sooner than fall into their hands. That is like a woman, Fry. A fig for me being drowned if the kid is drowned with me; and I don’t even care so much for the kid being drowned if I go down with him, and the cowardly vermin dogs and men stood barking on the bank and durstn’t follow a woman; but your cruel ones are always cowards. And now the rips have got hold of this Tom. A chap with no great harm in him that I see, except that he is a bit of a sniveller and psalm-singer, and makes you sick at times, but he isn’t lazy; and now they are mauling him because he couldn’t do the work of two. A man can but do his best black or white, and it is infernal stupidity as well as cruelty to torment a fellow because he can’t do more

than he can do. And all this because over the same flesh and blood there is the sixteenth of an inch of skin a different colour. Wonder whether a white bear takes a black one for a hog, or a red fox takes a blue one for a badger. Well, Fry, thank your stars that you were born in Britain. There are no slaves here, and no buying and selling of human flesh; and one law for high and low, rich and poor, and justice for the weak as well as the strong.’

‘Yes, sir,’ said Fry deferentially, ‘are you coming into the gaol sir?’

‘No,’ replied Hawes sturdily, ‘I won’t move till I see what becomes of the negro, and what is done to this eternal ruffian.’

‘But about the prisoners in my report, sir,’ remonstrated Fry.

‘Oh, you can see to that without my coming,’ replied Hawes with nonchalance. ‘Put 40 and 45 in the jacket four hours a-piece. Mind there’s somebody by with the bucket against they sham.’

‘Yes sir.’

‘Put the boy on bread and water, and to-morrow I’ll ask the justices to let me flog him. No. 14—humph! —the same.’

‘And Robinson?’

‘Oh, give him no supper at all, and no breakfast, not even bread and water, d’ye hear. And at noon I’ll put him with his empty belly in the black-hole,—that will cow him down to the ground,—there be off!’

Next morning Mr. Hawes sat down to breakfast in

high spirits. This very day he was sure to humiliate his adversary, most likely get rid of him altogether.

Mr. Eden, on the contrary, wore a sombre air. Hawes noticed it mistook it and pointed it out to Fry. 'He is down upon his luck: he knows he is coming to an end.'

After breakfast Mr. Eden went into Robinson's cell: He found him haggard.

'Oh, I am glad you are come sir; they are starving me! No supper last night, no breakfast this morning, and all for—hum.'

'For what?'

'Well, sir, then—having paper in my cell, and for writing—doing what you bade me—writing my life.'

Mr. Eden coloured and winced. The cruelty and the personal insult combined almost took away his breath for a moment.

'Heaven grant me patience a little longer' said he aloud.

Then he ran out of the cell, and returned in less than a minute with a great hunch of bread and a slice of ham.

'Eat this' said he all fluttering with pity.

The famished man ate like a wolf; but in the middle he did stop to say,

'Did one man ever save another so often as you have me! Now my belly is full I shall have strength to stand the jacket, or whatever is to come next.'

'But you are not to be tormented further than this, I hope?'

‘Ah, sir!’ replied Robinson, ‘you don’t know the scoundrel yet. He is not starving me for nothing. This is to weaken me till he puts the weight on that is to crush me.’

‘I hope you exaggerate his personal dislike to you and your own importance, we all do that.’

‘Well’ sighed Robinson, ‘I hope I do. Any way now my belly is full I have got a chance with him.’

The visiting justices met in the gaol. The first to arrive was Mr. Woodcock. In fact he came at eleven o’clock, an hour before the others. Had Mr. Hawes expected him so soon, he would have taken Carter down, who was the pilloried one this morning; but he was equal to the emergency. He met Mr. Woodcock with a depressed manner, as of a tender but wise father, who in punishing his offspring had punished himself, and said in a low regretful voice,

‘I am sorry to say I have been compelled to punish a prisoner very severely.’

‘What is his offence?’

‘Being refractory and breaking his crank. You will find him in the labor-yard. He was so violent, we were obliged to put him in the jacket.’

‘I shall see him. The labor-yard is the first place I go to.’

Mr. Hawes knew that, Mr. Woodcock.

The justice found Carter in that state of pitiable torture, the sight of which made Mr. Eden very ill. He went up to him and said,

'My poor fellow, I am very sorry for you ; but discipline must be maintained, and you are now suffering for fighting against it. Make your submission to the governor, and then I dare say he will shorten your punishment as far as he thinks consistent with his duty.'

Carter, it may well be imagined, made no answer. It is doubtful whether the worthy magistrate expected or required one. An occasion for misjudging a self-evident case of cruelty had arrived. This worthy seized the opportunity, received an *ex parte* statement for Gospel, and misjudged spite of his senses.

Item. An occasion for twaddling had come, and this good soul seized it and twaddled into a man's ear who was fainting on the rack.

At this moment the more observant Hawes saw the signs of shamming coming on. So he said hastily,

'Oh he will come to soon, and then he will be taken down ;' and moved away.' Mr. Woodcock followed him without one grain of suspicion or misgiving.

The English State has had many opportunities of gauging the average intellects of its unpaid jurists. By these it has profited so well, that it intrusts blindly to this gentleman and his brethren the following commission :—

They are to come into a place of darkness and mystery, a place locked up ; a place which, by the folly of the nation and the shallow egotists who are its placemen and are called its statesmen, is not subject to the only safeguard of law and morals, daily inspec-

tion by the great unprejudiced public. They are to come into this the one pitch-dark hole that is now left in the land. They are to come here once in two months, and at this visit to see all that has been done there in the dark since their last visit. Their eagle eye is not to be hoodwinked by appearances got up to meet their visit. They are to come and comprehend with one piercing glance the past months as well as the present hour. Good. Only for this task is required not the gullibility that characterises the many, but the sagacity that distinguishes the few.

Mr. Woodcock undertook not to be deceived as to what had been done in the gaol while he was forty miles distant, and Hawes gulled him under his own eyes.

What different men there are in the world, and how differently are the same things seen by them! The first crucifixion Eden saw he turned as sick as a dog—the first crucifixion Woodcock saw he twaddled in the crucified’s ear, left him on the cross, and went on his way well pleased.

Hawes finding what sort of man he had to deal with, thought within himself, ‘Why should I compromise discipline in any point?’ He said to Mr. Woodcock,

‘There is another prisoner whom I am afraid I must give an hour in the dark cell.’

‘What has he been doing?’

‘Scribbling a lot of lies upon some paper he got from the chaplain.’

Mr. Hawes’s brief and unkind definition of autobiography did Robinson’s business. Mr. Woodcock

simply observed that the proposed punishment was by no means a severe one for the offence.

They visited several cells. Woodcock addressed the prisoners in certain words, accompanied with certain tones and looks that were at least as significant as his words, and struck the prisoners as more sincere.

The words.—'If you have anything to complain of here, now is the time to say so, and your complaint shall be sifted.'

The tones and looks.—'I know you are better off here than such scum as you deserve, but you have a right to contradict me if you like; only mind, if you don't prove it to my satisfaction, who am not the man to believe anything you say, you had better have held your tongue.'

Meantime Mr. Hawes said nothing, but fixed his eye on the rogue, and that eye said 'One word of discontent, and the moment he is gone I massacre you.' Then followed in every case the old theatrical business according to each rogue's measure of ability. They were in the Elysian fields; one thing alone saddened them; some day or other they must return to the world.

Fathers sent by your apprehensive wives to see whether Dicky is well used at that school or not, don't draw Dicky into a corner of the playground, and with tender kisses and promises of inviolable secrecy, coax him to open his little heart to you, and tell you whether he is really happy: leave such folly to women it is a weakness to wriggle into the truth as they do.

No! you go like a man into the parlour with the schoolmaster, then have Dicky in, let him see the two authorities together on good terms, then ask him whether he is happy and comfortable and well used. He will tell you he is; go home rejoicing, but before you go into the drawing-room do pray spend twenty minutes by the kitchen fire, and then go upstairs to the boy’s mother—and let her eat you, for you belong to the family of the Woodcocks.

‘We are passing one cell.’

‘Oh! that one is empty,’ replied Hawes.

Not quite empty; there was a beach coffin standing in that cell, and the corpse of a murdered thief lay waiting for it.

At twelve o’clock the justices were all assembled in their room.

‘We will send you a message in half an hour, Mr. Hawes.’

Mr. Hawes bowed and retired, and bade Fry to take Robinson to the dark cell. The poor fellow knew resistance was useless. He came out at the word of command, despair written on his face. Of all the horrors of this hell the dark cell was the one he most dreaded. He looked up to Hawes to see if anything he could say would soften him. No! that hardened face showed neither pity nor intelligence; as well appeal to a stone statue of a mule.

At this moment Mr. Eden came into the gaol. Robinson met him on the ground-floor, and cried out to him, ‘Sir, they are sending me to the black hole

for it. I am a doomed man ; the black hole for six hours.'

'No !' roared Hawes from above, 'for twelve hours ; the odd six is for speaking in prison.

Robinson groaned.

'I will take you out in three,' said Mr. Eden, calmly.

Hawes heard and laughed aloud.

'Give me your hand on that sir for pity's sake,' cried Robinson.

Mr. Eden gave him his hand and said, firmly, 'I will take you out in two hours, please God.'

Hawes chuckled : 'Parson is putting his foot in it more and more. The justices shall know this.'

This momentary contact with his good angel gave Robinson one little ray of hope for a companion in the cave of darkness, madness, and death.

CHAPTER IV.

THE justices went through their business in the usual routine. They had Mr. Hawes's book up, examined the entries, received them with implicit confidence, looked for no other source of information to compare them with. Examined one witness and did not cross-examine him.

This done, one of them proposed to concoct their report at once. Another suggested that the materials were not complete; that there was a charge against the chaplain. This should be looked into, and should it prove grave, embodied in their report.

Mr. Williams over-ruled this. 'We can reprimand or if need be the bench can dismiss a chaplain without troubling the Secretaries of State. Let us make our report and then look into the chaplain's conduct, who is after all a new comer, and they say a little cracked, he is a man of learning.'

So they wrote their report, and in it expressed their conviction that the system on the whole worked admirably. They noticed the incident of Josephs' suicide, but attached no significance and little import-

ance to it. Out of a hundred and eighty prisoners there would be a few succumb in one way or another under the system, but on the whole the system worked well.

Jugger system's wheels were well greased, and so long as they were well greased it did not matter their crushing one or two. Besides the crushed were only prisoners—the refuse of society. They reported the governor Mr. Hawes, as a painstaking, active, zealous officer; and now Mr. Hawes was called in, the report was read to him, and he bowed, laid his hand upon his aorta, and presented a histrionic picture of modest merit surprised by unexpected praise from a high quarter.

Next, Mr. Hawes was requested to see the report sent off to the post.

'I will gentlemen;' and in five minutes he was at the post-office in person, and his praises on the way to his Sovereign or her representative.

'How long will the parson take us?'

'Oh! not ten minutes.'

'I hope not, for I want to look at a horse.'

'We had better send for him at once then.'

The bell was rung and the chaplain sent for.

The chaplain was praying the prayers for the sick by the side of a dying prisoner. He sent back word how he was employed, and that he would come as soon as he had done.

This message was not well received. Keep a living justice waiting for a dying dog!

‘These puppies want taking down’ said Mr. Woodcock.

‘Oh leave him to me,’ replied Mr. Williams.

Soon after this the following puppy came into the room. A gentleman of commanding figure, erect but easy, with a head of remarkable symmetry and an eye like a stag’s. He entered the room quietly but rather quickly, and with an air of business; bowed rapidly to the three gentlemen in turn, and waited in silence their commands.

Then Mr. Williams drew himself up in his chair, and wore the solemn and dignified appearance that becomes a judge trying a prisoner, with this difference that his manner was not harsh or intentionally offensive, but just such as to reveal his vast superiority and irresistible weight.

In a solemn tone with a touch of pity he began thus:

‘I am sorry to say Mr. Eden, that grave charges are laid against you in the prison.’

‘Give yourself no uneasiness on my account sir’ replied Mr. Eden politely, ‘they are perhaps false.’

‘Yet they come from one who has means of knowing—from the governor Mr. Hawes.’

‘Ah! then they are sure to be false.’

‘We shall see. Four Sundays ago you preached a sermon.’

‘Two.’

‘Ay! but one was against cruelty.’

‘It was; the other handled theft.’

'Mr. Hawes conceives himself to have been singled out and exposed by that sermon.'

'Why so? there are more than thirty cruel men in this gaol besides him.'

'Then this sermon was not aimed at him?' put Mr. Williams with a pinning air.

'It was and it was not. It was aimed at that class of my parishioners to which he belongs; a large class, including all the turnkeys but one, between twenty and thirty of the greater criminals among the prisoners and Mr. Hawes.'

Mr. Williams bit his lip. 'Gentlemen this classification shows the animus;' then turning to Mr. Eden he said with a half-incredulous sneer, 'How comes it that Mr. Hawes took this sermon all to himself?'

Mr. Eden smiled.

'How does it happen that two prisoners, 82 and 87, took it all to themselves? These two men sent for me after the sermon; they were wife-beaters. I found them both in great agitation. One terrified, the other softened to tears of penitence. These did not apply my words to Mr. Hawes. The truth is when a searching sermon is preached each sinner takes it to himself. I am glad Mr. Hawes fitted the cap on. I am glad the prisoners fitted the cap on. I am sorry Mr. Hawes was irritated instead of reformed. I am glad those two less hardened sinners were reformed instead of irritated.'

'And I must tell you, sir, that we disapprove of your style of preaching altogether, and we shall do

more, we shall make a change in this respect the condition of your remaining in office.’

‘And the bishop of the diocese?’ asked Mr. Eden.

‘What about him?’

‘Do you think he will allow you, an ignorant inexperienced layman, to usurp the episcopal function in his diocese.’

‘The episcopal function? Mr. Eden.’

Mr. Eden smiled.

‘He does not even see that he has been trying to usurp sacred functions and of the highest order. But it is all of a piece, a profound ignorance of all law, civil or ecclesiastical, characterizes all your acts in this gaol. My good soul just ask yourself for what purpose does a bishop exist? Why is one priest raised above other priests, and consecrated bishop but to enable the church to govern its servants. I laugh but I ought rather to rebuke you. What you have attempted is something worse than childish arrogance. Be warned! and touch not the sacred vessels so rashly—it is profanation.’

The flashing eye and the deepening voice, and the old awful ecclesiastical superiority suddenly thundering upon them quite cowed the two smaller magistrates. Williams whose pomposity the priest had so rudely shaken gasped for breath with rage. Magisterial arrogance was not prepared for ecclesiastical arrogance, and the blow was stunning.

‘Gentlemen, I wish to consult you. Be pleased to retire for a minute.’

A discussion took place in the chaplain’s absence,

Williams was for dismissing him on the spot, but the others who were cooler would not hear of it. 'We have made a false move,' said they, 'and he saw our mistake and made the most of it. Never mind! we shall catch him on other ground.'

During this discussion Mr. Eden had not been idle; he went into Robinson's empty cell, and coolly placed there another inkstand pen and quire in the place of those Hawes had removed. Then glancing at his watch he ran hastily out of the gaol. Opposite the gate he found four men waiting; they were there by appointment.

'Giles,' said he to one, 'I think a gentleman will come down by the next train. Go to the station and hire Jenkyns's fly with the grey horse. Let no one have it who is not coming on to the gaol. You two stay by the printing-press and loom 'till further orders. Jackson you keep in the way too. My servant will bring you your dinner at two o'clock.'

He then ran back to the justices. They were waiting for him.

Mr. Williams began with a cutting coldness—

'We did not wish to go the length of laying a complaint against you before the bishop, but if you really prefer this to a friendly remonstrance—'

'I prefer the right thing to the wrong thing' was the prompt and calm rejoinder.

'The complaint shall be made.'

Mr. Eden bowed, and his eyes twinkled. He pictured to himself this pompous personage writing to the

Bishop of * * * , to tell him that he objected to Mr. Eden’s preaching; not that he had ever heard it; but that in attacking a great human vice it had hit a gaoler.

‘The next I think we can deal with. Mr. Hawes complains that you constantly interfere between him and the prisoners, and undermine his authority.’

‘I support him in all his legal acts but I do oppose his illegal ones.’

‘Your whole aim is to subvert the discipline of the gaol.’

‘On the contrary, I assure you I am the only officer of the gaol who maintains the discipline as by law established.’

‘Am I to understand that you give Mr. Hawes the lie?’

‘You shall phrase my contradiction according to your own taste sir.’

‘And which do you think is likeliest to be believed?’

‘Mr. Hawes by you gentlemen; Mr. Eden by the rest of the nation.’

Here Mr. Palmer put in his word.

‘I don’t think we ought to pay less respect to one man’s bare assertion than to another’s. It is a case for proof.’

‘Well but Palmer,’ replied Woodcock, ‘how can the gaol go on with these two at daggers drawn?’

‘It cannot’ said Mr. Eden.

‘Ah you can see that.’

'A house divided against itself!' suggested Mr. Eden.

'Well then,' said Mr. Woodcock, 'let us try and give a more friendly tone to this discussion.'

'Why not?—our weapons would bear polishing.'

'Yes: you have a high reputation Mr. Eden, both for learning and Christian feeling; in fact the general consideration in which you are held has made us more lenient in this case than we should have been with another man in your office.'

'There you are all wrong.'

'You can't mean that; make us some return for this feeling. You know and feel the value of peace and unity?'

'I do.'

'Then be the man to restore them to this place.'

'I will try.'

'The governor and you cannot pull together—one must go.'

'Clearly.'

'Well then, no stigma shall rest on you—you will be allowed to offer us your voluntary resignation.'

'Excuse me, I propose to arrive at peace and unity by another route.'

'But I see no other.'

'If I turn Mr. Hawes out it will come to the same thing, will it not?'

'Mr. Hawes?'

'Mr. Hawes.'

'But you can't turn him out, sir,' sneered Williams.

‘I think I can.’

‘He has our confidence and our respect, and shall have our protection.’

‘Still I will turn him out with God’s help.’

‘This is a defiance, Mr. Eden.’

‘You cannot really think me capable of defying three justices of the peace!’ said Mr. Eden in a solemn tone his eyes twinkling.

‘Defiance! no,’ said Mr. Palmer innocently.

‘Well, but Palmer, his opposition to Mr. Hawes is opposition to us, and is so bitter that it leaves us no alternative: we must propose to the bench to remove you from your office.’

Mr. Eden bowed

‘And meantime’ put in Mr. Williams, ‘we shall probably suspend you this very day by our authority.’

Mr. Eden bowed.

‘We will not detain you any longer, sir,’ said Williams rather insolently.

‘I will but stay to say one word to this gentleman, who has conducted himself with courtesy towards me. Sir, for your own sake do not enter on this contest with me: it is an unequal one. A boy has just been murdered in this prison. I am about to drag his murderer into the light; why hang upon his skirts, and compel me to expose you to public horror as his abettor? There is yet time to disown the foul practices of—hell! He looked at his watch—there is half an hour. Do not waste it in acts which our superiors will undo. See here are the prison rules; a child could understand

them. A child could see that what you call "the discipline" is a pure invention of the present gaoler, and contradicts the discipline as by law established, and consequently that Josephs and others have been murdered by this lawless man. These *are* the prison rules, are they not? and here are the gaoler's proceedings in the month of January, compare the two, and separate your honorable name from the contact of this caitiff, whose crimes will gibbet him in the nation's eyes, and you with him, unless you seize this chance and withdraw your countenance from him.'

The three injustices rose by one impulse.

'Make your preparations to leave the gaol,' said Mr. Woodcock.

'Half an hour is quite enough under the circumstances' said Williams.

Palmer stood aghast—his mind was not fast enough to keep up.

Mr. Eden bowed and retired.

He was scarcely out of the room when the justices drew up an order for his suspension from his office.

Mr. Hawes was next sent for.

We have found the chaplain all you described him. Discipline is impossible with such a man; here is an order for his suspension. Hawes's eyes sparkled. 'We will enter it into the book, meantime you are to see it executed.' Hawes went out, but presently returned.

'He won't go, gentlemen.'

'What do you mean by he won't go?' said Williams.

'I told him your orders; and he said, "Tell their worships they are exceeding their authority, and I won't go."'

'Then I said, they give you half an hour to pack up and then you must pack off.'

'He! he! he! and what did he say?'

'Oh, they give me half an hour do they,' says he, 'you take them this, and he wrote this on a slip of paper—here it is.'

The slip contained these words—

πολλα μεταξυ πελει κυλικος και χειλεος ακρου.

While the justices were puzzling over this, Hawes added 'Gentlemen, he said in his polite way, "If it is like the prison rules and beats their comprehension, you may tell them it means—

"There is many a slip
"Twixt the cup and the lip."

'Well Mr. Hawes what next?'

'I am victualled for a siege,' says he, and he goes into his own room, and I heard him shoot the bolt.

'What does that mean?' inquired Mr. Palmer.

'It means sir, that you won't get him out except by kicking him out.' Hawes had been irritating their wounded vanity in order to get them up to this mark.

'Then turn him out by force' said Williams: but the other two were wiser. 'No, we must not do that—we can keep him out if once he crosses the door.'

'I will manage it for you, gentlemen,' said Mr. Hawes.

'Do.'

Mr. Hawes went out and primed Fry with a message to Mr. Eden that a gentleman had ridden over from Oxford to see him, and was at his house.

Mr. Eden was in his room busy collecting and arranging several papers: he had just tied them up in a little portfolio when he heard Fry's voice at the door. When that worthy delivered his message his lip curled with scorn. But he said 'Very well. I will disappoint the sly boobies,' thought he. But the next moment, looking out of his window, he saw a fly with a grey horse coming along the road. 'At last,' he cried, and instantly unbolted his door, and issued forth with his little portfolio under his arm. He had scarce taken ten steps when a turnkey popped out from a corner, and stood sentinel over his room-door barring all return.

Mr. Eden smiled and passed on along the corridor. He descended from the first floor to the basement. Here he found Hawes affecting business, but not skillfully enough to hide that he was watching Mr. Eden out.

In the yard leading to the great door he found the injustices. Aha! thought he waiting to see me out. He raised his hat politely. Williams took no notice. The others slight.

'There is many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip,'

said he to them looking them calmly over, then sauntered towards the gate.

Mr. Hawes came creeping after and joined the injustices; every eye furtively watched the parson whom they had outwitted. Fry himself had gone to the lodge to let him out and keep him out. He was but a few steps from the door. Hawes chuckled; his heart beat with exultation. Another moment and that huge barrier would be interposed for ever between him and his enemy, the prisoners’ friend.

‘Open the door Mr. Fry,’ said the chaplain.

Fry pulled it quickly open.

‘And let that gentleman in!’

A middle-aged gentleman was paying off his fly.

The door being thus thrown open he walked quickly into the gaol as if it belonged to him.

‘Who is this?’ inquired Mr. Williams sharply.

The new-comer inquired as sharply ‘The governor of this gaol?’

Mr. Hawes stepped forward: ‘I am the governor.’

The new comer handed him his card and a note.

‘Mr. Lacy from the Home Office’ said Mr. Hawes to the injustices. ‘These, sir, are the visiting justices.’

Mr. Lacy bowed, but addressed himself to Mr. Hawes only.

‘Grave charges have been made against you sir. I am here to see whether matters are such as to call for a closer investigation.’

‘May I ask, sir, who makes the charges against me?’

'The chaplain of your own gaol.'

'But he is my enemy, sir, my personal enemy.'

'Don't distress yourself. No public man is safe from detraction. We hear an excellent account of you from every quarter but this one. My visit will probably turn to your advantage.'

Hawes brightened.

'Is there any room in which I could conduct this inquiry?'

'Will you be pleased to come to the justices' room?'

'Yes. Let us go there at once. Gentlemen, you shall be present if you choose.'

'It is right you should know the chaplain is cracked,' said Mr. Williams.

'I should not wonder. Pray,' inquired Mr. Lacy, 'who was that bilious-looking character near the gate when I came in?'

'Why that was the chaplain.'

'I thought so! I dare say we shall find he has taken a jaundiced view of things. Send for him if you please, and let us get through the business as quick as we can.'

When Mr. Eden came he found Mr. Lacy chatting pleasantly with his four adversaries. On his entrance the gentleman's countenance fell a little, and Mr. Eden had the pleasure of seeing that this man too was prejudiced against him.

'Mr.—Mr.—?'

'Eden.'

‘Mr. Eden, be seated if you please. You appear to be ill sir?’

‘I am recovering from a mortal sickness.’

‘The jaundice eh?’

‘Something of that nature.’

‘A horrible complaint.’

Mr. Eden bowed.

‘I have had some experience of it. Are you aware of its effect on the mind?’

‘I feel its effect on the temper and the nerves.’

‘Deeper than that sir, it colours the judgment. Makes us look at everything on the dark side.’

Mr. Eden sighed: ‘I see what you are driving at, but you confound effect with cause.’

Mr. Lacy shrugged his shoulders, opened his portfolio, and examined a paper or two.

‘Mr. Hawes, you served her Majesty in another way before you came here?’

‘Five and twenty years, sir, man and boy.’

‘And I think with credit?’

‘My will has been good to do my duty, whatever my abilities may be.’

‘I believe you distinguished yourself at sea in a storm in the West Indies?’

Mr. Williams put in warmly ‘He went out to a vessel in distress in a hurricane at Jamaica.’

‘It was off the Mauritius’ observed Mr. Eden with a gleam of satisfaction.

‘Well’ said Mr. Lacy ‘he saved other lives at the risk of his own, no matter where. Pray Mr. Eden,

does your reading and experience lead you to believe that a brave man is ever a cruel one?"

'Yes.'

'There is a proverb that the cruel are always cowards.'

'Cant! seven out of twelve are cowards and five brave.'

'I don't agree with you. The presumption is all on Mr. Hawes's side.'

'And only the facts on mine.'

Mr. Lacy smiled superciliously. 'To the facts let us go then. You received a note from the Home Office this morning. In compliance with that note have you prepared your case?'

'Yes.'

'Will you begin by giving me an idea what the nature of your evidence will be?'

'A page or two of print twenty of manuscript three or four living witnesses, and—one dead body.'

'Hum! he seems in earnest, gentlemen. How long do you require to state your case? Can it be done to-day?' Mr. Lacy looked at his watch half peevishly.

'Half an-hour' was the reply.

'Only half an-hour?'

'Ay, but half an-hour neat.'

'What do you mean by neat?'

'The minutes not to be counted that are wasted in idle interruptions or in arguments drawn from vague probabilities with direct evidence under our senses. For instance, that because I have been twenty-five

years a servant of Christ with good repute therefore it is not to be credited I could bring a false accusation ; or that because Mr. Hawes was brave twenty years ago in one set of circumstances therefore he cannot be cruel now in another set of circumstances.’

Mr. Lacy coloured a little, but he took a pinch of snuff, and then coolly drew out of his pocket a long paper sealed.

‘Have you any idea what this is?’

Mr. Eden caught sight of the direction ; it was to himself.

‘Probably my dismissal from my post?’

‘It is.’

Hawes quivered with exultation.

“And I have authority to present you with it if you do not justify the charges you have made against a brother officer.”

‘Good!’ said Mr. Eden. ‘This is intelligent and it is just. The first gleam of either that has come into this dark hole since I have known it. I augur well from this.’

‘This is a character gentlemen.’

‘To business, sir?’ inquired Mr. Eden undoing his portfolio.

‘Sir,’ put in Mr. Hawes, ‘I object to an ex parte statement from a personal enemy. You are here to conduct a candid inquiry, not to see the chaplain conduct a hostile one. I feel that justice is safe in your hands, but not in his.’

‘Stop a bit’ said Mr. Eden ; ‘I am to be dismissed

unless I prove certain facts. See! the Secretary of State has put me on my defence. I will intrust that defence to no man but myself.'

'You are keen sir but—you are in the right; and you Mr. Hawes will be here to correct his errors and to make your own statement after he has done, in half an hour.'

'Ah! well!' thought Hawes, 'he can't do me much harm in half an hour.'

'Begin, sir!' and he looked at his watch.

'Mr. Hawes, I want your book; the log-book of the prison.'

'Get it Mr. Hawes if you please.'

Mr. Hawes went out.

'Mr. Williams, are these the Prison Rules by Act of Parliament?' and he showed him the paper.

'They are sir.'

'Examine them closely Mr. Lacy; they contain the whole discipline of this prison as by law established. Keep them before you. It is with these you will have to compare the gaoler's acts. And now, how many times is the gaoler empowered to punish any given prisoner?'

'Once! on a second offence the prisoner, I see, is referred for punishment to the visiting justices.'

'If, therefore, this gaoler has taken upon himself to punish the same prisoner twice, he has broken the law.'

'At all events he has gone beyond the letter of this particular set of rules.'

'But these rules were drawn up by lawyers, and are based on the law of the land. A gaoler, in the eye of the law, is merely a head turnkey set to guard the prisoners: for hundreds of years he had no lawful right to punish a prisoner at all; that right was first bestowed on him with clear limitations by an act passed in George the Fourth's reign, which I must show you, because that act is a gaoler's sole authority for punishing a prisoner at all: here is the passage, sir; will you be kind enough to read it out?'

'Hum! "*The keeper of every prison shall have power to hear all complaints touching any of the following offences:—disobedience of the prison rules, assaults by one prisoner on another where no dangerous wound is given, profane cursing or swearing, any indecent behaviour at chapel, idleness or negligence in work. The said keeper may punish all such offences by ordering any offender to close confinement in the refractory or solitary cells, and by keeping such offenders upon bread and water only for any term not exceeding three days.*"'

'Observe,' put in Mr. Eden, 'he can only punish once, and then not select the punishment according to his own fancy; he is restricted to separate confinement and bread and water and three days.'

Mr. Lacy continued: "'*In case any criminal prisoner shall be guilty of any repeated offence against the rules of the prison, or of any greater offence than the gaoler is by this act empowered to punish, the said gaoler shall forthwith report the same to the visiting*

justices, who can punish for one month, or felons or those sentenced to hard labour by personal correction."

'Such sir' said Mr. Eden 'is the law of England, and the men who laid down our prison rules were not so ignorant or unscrupulous as to run their head against the statute law of the land. No! where in our prison rules will you find any power given to our gaoler to punish any but minor offences, or to punish any prisoner more than once, or to inflict any variety of punishments. Such are this gaoler's powers, now for his acts and their consequences—follow me.

'Evans open this cell. Jenkyns, what are you in prison for?'

'For running away from sarvice, your reverence.'

'How often have you been punished since you came?'

'A good many times, your reverence.'

'By the visiting justices?'

'No sir! I was never punished by them, only by the governor.'

'What have been your offences?'

'I don't know, sir; I never meant to offend at all, but I am not very strong, and the governor he puts me on a heavy crank and then I can't always do the work, and I suppose he thinks it is for want of the will, and so he gives it me.'

'How has he punished you?'

'Oh! sometimes it is clamming; nothing but a two-penny roll all day, and kept to hard work all the same;

sometimes my bed taken away you know sir, but mostly the punishment jacket.’

Mr. Lacy. ‘The punishment jacket; what is that?’

Mr. Eden. ‘Look in the prison rules and see if you can find a punishment jacket; meantime come with me. Two gross violations of the law—repetition of punishment and variety of punishments. Evans open this cell. What are you in for?’

Prisoner (taking off his cap politely). ‘Burglary, gentlemen.’

‘Have you been often refractory since you came here?’

‘Once or twice sir; but—’

‘But what?’

‘These gentlemen are the visiting justices?’

‘Yes!’

‘They would be offended if I told the truth.’

Mr. Lacy. ‘I am here from the Secretary of State, and I bid you tell the truth.’

Prisoner. ‘Oh! are you sir; well then the truth is, I never was refractory but once.’

Lacy. ‘Oh! you were refractory once?’

Prisoner. ‘Yes, sir!’

Lacy. ‘How came that?’

Prisoner. ‘Well, sir! it was the first week; I had never been in a separate cell before, and it drove me mad; no one came near me nor spoke a word to me, and I turned savage; I didn’t know myself, and I broke everything in the cell.’

Mr. Eden. ‘And the other times?’

Prisoner. 'The other times, sir, I was called refractory but I was not.'

Eden. 'What punishments have been inflicted on you by the governor?'

Prisoner. 'Well, sir! the black cell, bread and water, and more of that; took away my gas once or twice, but generally it was the punishment jacket.'

Mr. Lacy. 'Hum! the punishment jacket.'

Mr. Eden. 'How long since you had the punishment jacket?'

Prisoner. 'No longer than yesterday.'

Mr. Eden. 'Strip, my man, and let us look at your back.'

The prisoner stripped and showed his back, striped livid and red by the cutting straps.

Mr. Lacy gave a start, but the next moment he resumed his official composure, and at this juncture Mr. Hawes bustled into the cell and fixed his eye on the prisoner; 'What are you doing?' said he eyeing the man.

'The gentleman made me strip sir,' said the prisoner with an ill-used air.

'Have you any complaint to make against me?'

'No, sir!'

'Then what have you been humbugging us for all this time,' cried Mr. Williams, contemptuously.

'For instance,' cried Mr. Eden in the same tone, staring slyly at Mr. Lacy, 'how dare you show us frightful whails upon your back when you know they only exist in your imagination—and mine.'

Mr. Lacy laughed. 'That is true, he can't retract his whails, and I shall be glad to know how they came there.' Here he made a note.

'I will show you by-and-by, said Mr. Eden.

The next two cells they went to, the prisoners assured Mr. Lacy that they were treated like Mr. Hawes's children.

'Well sir!' said Lacy, with evident satisfaction, 'what do you say to that?'

'I say use your eyes.' And he wheeled the last prisoner to the light. 'Look at this hollow eye and faded cheek; look at this trembling frame and feel this halting pulse. Here is a poor wretch crushed and quelled by cruelty till scarce a vestige of man is left. Look at him! here is an object to pretend to you that he has been kindly used. Poor wretch his face gives the lie to his tongue, and my life on it his body confirms his face. Strip my lad.'

Mr. Hawes interposed, and said it was cruel to make a prisoner strip to gratify curiosity.

Mr. Eden laughed. 'Come strip' said he 'the gentleman is waiting.'

The prisoner reluctantly took off his coat waistcoat and shirt, and displayed an emaciated person and several large livid stripes on his back.

Mr. Lacy looked grave.

'Now Mr. Lacy you see the real reason why this humane gentleman did not like the prisoner to strip. Come to another. Before we go in to this one let me ask you one question: Do you think they will ever

tell you the truth while Mr. Hawes's eye is on them?'

'Hum! they certainly seem to stand in awe of Mr. Hawes.'

Hawes. 'But, sir! you see how bitter the chaplain is against me. Where he is I ought to be if I am to have fair play.'

'Certainly Mr. Hawes certainly! that is but fair.'

Mr. Eden. 'What are you in for?'

Prisoner. 'Taking a gentleman's wive gentlemen.'

Mr. Eden. 'Have you been often punished?'

Prisoner. 'Yes, your reverence! Why you know I have; now didn't you save my life when they were starving me to death two months ago?'

'*Mr. Lacy.* 'How did he save your life?'

Prisoner. 'Made 'em put me on the sick list, and put something into my poor belly.'

Mr. Lacy. 'What state was the man in Mr. Eden?'

Mr. Eden. 'He was like a skeleton, and so weak that he could only speak two or three words at a time, and then had to stop a long while and recover strength to say two or three more. I did not think a human creature could be so near death and not die.'

Mr. Lacy. 'And did you know the cause?'

Mr. Eden. 'Frankly, I did not. I had not at that time fathomed all the horrors of this place.'

Mr. Lacy. 'Did you tell the chaplain at the time you were starving?'

Prisoner. 'No!'

Mr. Eden. 'And why not?'

Mr. Hawes. 'Simply because he never was starving.'

Prisoner. 'Well! I'll tell you, gentlemen; his reverence said to me, "My poor fellow you are very ill, I must have you on the sick list directly," and then he went for the doctor. Now I knew if I got on the sick list they would fill my belly; so I said to myself, best let well alone. If I had told him it was only starvation he would not interfere I thought.'

Mr. Lacy opened his eyes. Mr. Eden sighed.

Mr. Lacy. 'You seem to have a poor opinion of her Majesty's officers.'

Prisoner. 'Didn't know him you see didn't know his character; the humbug that was here before him would have let a poor fellow be kicked into his grave before his eyes, and not hold out a hand to save him.'

Mr. Lacy. 'Let me understand you—were you kept without food?'

Prisoner. 'I was a day and a half without any food at all.'

Mr. Lacy. 'By whose orders?'

Prisoner. 'By the governor's there, and I was a week on a twopenny loaf once a-day, and kept at hard work on that till I dropped. Ah your reverence, I shall never forget your face. I should be under the sod now if it was not for you.'

Williams. 'You rascal, the last time I was here you told me you never were so happy and comfortable.'

Prisoner. 'Ha! ha! ha! ha! hee! hee! haw! haw! ho! I ask your pardon for laughing sir; but you are so

precious green. Why if I had told you the truth then, I shouldn't be alive to talk to you now.'

'What I should have murdered you, should I' said Mr. Hawes, with a lofty sneer.

'Why you know you would sir,' replied the prisoner firmly and respectfully, looking him full in the face before them all.

Mr. Lacy. 'You don't think so, or you would not take these liberties with him now.'

The prisoner cast a look of pity on Mr. Lacy.

'Well you *are* green what can't you see that I am going out to-day? Do you think I'd be such a cully as to tell a pack of green-horns like you the truth before a sharp hand like our governor, if I was in his power; no, my term of imprisonment expired at twelve o'clock to-day.'

'Then why are you here?'

'I'll tell you, sir, our governor always detains a prisoner for hours after the law sets him free, so then the poor fellow has not time to get back to his friends, so then he sleeps in the town, ten to one at a public-house; gets a glass, gets into bad company, and in a month or two comes back here; that is the move sir. Bless you they are so fond of us they don't like to part with us for good and all.'

Mr. Lacy. 'I do not for a moment believe Mr. Hawes, that you have foreseen these consequences, but the detention of this man after twelve o'clock is clearly illegal, and you must liberate him on the instant.'

Mr. Hawes. 'That I will, and I wish this had been

pointed out to me before, but it was a custom of the prison before my time.'

Mr. Eden. 'Evans come this way, come in, how long have you been a turnkey here.'

Evans. 'Four years, sir.'

Mr. Eden. 'Do you happen to remember the practice of the late governor with respect to prisoners whose sentence had expired?'

Evans. 'Yes sir! They were kept in their cells all the morning: then at eleven their own clothes were brought in clean and dry; and they had half an hour given them to take off the prison dress and put on their own. Then a little before twelve they were taken into the governor's own room for a word of friendly advice on leaving, or a good book, or a tract, or what not. Then at sharp twelve the gate was opened for them, and—'

Prisoner. 'Good bye—till we see you again.'

Evans (sternly). 'Come my man, it is not for you to speak till you are spoken to.'

Mr. Eden. 'You must not take that tone with the gentleman Evans, this is not a queen's prisoner, it is a private guest of Mr. Hawes. But time flies. If after what we have heard and seen, you still doubt whether this gaoler has broken the law by punishing the same prisoner more than once, and in more ways than one, fresh evidence will meet you at every step, but I would now direct your principal attention to other points. Look at Rule 37. By this rule each prisoner must be visited and conversed with by four officers every day,

and they are to stay with him upon the aggregate half an hour in the day. Now the object of this rule is to save the prisoners from dying under the natural and inevitable operation of solitude and enforced silence, two things that are fatal to life and reason.'

'But solitary confinement is legal.'

Mr. Eden sighed heavily.

'No it is not: separate confinement, *i. e.* separation of prisoner from prisoner is legal, but separation of a prisoner from the human race is as illegal as any other mode of homicide. It never was legal in England; it was legal for a short time in the United States, and do you know why it has been made illegal there?'

'No, I do not.'

'Because they found that life and reason went out under it like the snuff of a candle. Men went mad and died, as men have gone mad and died here through the habitual breach of Rule 37, a rule, the aim of which is to guard separate confinement from being shuffled into solitary confinement or homicide. Take twenty cells at random, and ask the prisoners how many officers come and say good words to them as bound by law; ask them whether they get their half hour per diem of improving conversation. There is a row of shambles, go into them by yourself, take neither the head butcher nor me.'

Mr. Lacy bit his lip, bowed stiffly, and beckoned Evans to accompany him into the cells. Mr. Hawes went in search of Fry, to concert what was best to be done. Mr. Eden paced the corridor. As for Mr. Lacy,

he took the cells at random, skipping here and there. At last he returned and sent for Mr. Hawes.

'I am sorry to say that the 37th Rule has been habitually violated ; the prisoners are unanimous ; they tell me that so far from half an hour's conversation, they never have three minutes, except with the chaplain, and during his late illness they were often in perfect solitude. They tell me too that when you do look in it is only to terrify them with angry words and threats. Solitude broken only by harsh language is a very sad condition for a human creature to lie in, the law it seems does not sanction it, and our own imperfections should plead against such terrible severity applied indiscriminately to great and small offenders.'

'Oh, that is well said, that is nobly said,' cried Mr. Eden, with enthusiasm.

'Sir ! I was put in here to carry out the discipline which had been relaxed by the late governor, and I have but obeyed orders as it was my duty.'

'Nonsense,' retorted Mr. Eden. 'The discipline of this gaol is comprised in these rules, of which eight out of ten are habitually broken by you.'

'He is right there so far Mr. Hawes : you are here to maintain not an imaginary discipline but an existing discipline strictly defined by printed rules, and it seems clear you have committed (through ignorance) serious breaches of these rules, but let us hope Mr. Eden that no irreparable consequences have followed this unlucky breach of Rule 37.'

'Irreparable? No !' replied Mr. Eden, bitterly.

'The Home Office can call men back from the grave, can't it? Here is a list of five men all extinguished in this prison by breach of Rule 37. You start : understand me, this is but a small portion of those who have been done to death here in various ways ; but these five dropped silently like autumn leaves by breach of Rule 37. Rule 37 is one of the safety valves, which the law more humane than the blockheads who execute it has attached to that terrible engine separate confinement.'

'I cannot accept this without evidence.'

'I have a book here that contains ample evidence ; you shall see it. Meantime I will just ask that turn-key about Hatchett, the first name on your list of victims. Evans, what did you find in Hatchett's cell when he was first discovered to be dying?'

'Eighteen loaves of bread, sir, on the floor in one corner.'

'Eighteen loaves ! I really don't understand.'

'Don't you, how could eighteen loaves have accumulated but by the man rejecting his food for several days? How could they have accumulated unobserved if Rule 37 had not been habitually broken? Alas ! sir, Hatchett's story, which I see is still dark to you, is as plain as my hand to all of us who know the fatal effects of solitary or homicidal confinement. Thus sir it was :—Unsustained by rational employment, uncheered by the sound of a human voice, torn out by the roots from all healthy contact with the human race, the prisoner Hatchett's heart and brain gave way together ; being now melancholy mad he shunned the

food that was jerked blindly into his cell, like a bone to a wolf, by this scientific contrivance to make brute fling food to brute, instead of man handing it with a smile to grateful man; and so his body sank (his spirits and reason had succumbed before) and he died. His offence was refusing to share his wages with a woman from whom he would have been divorced, but that he was too poor to buy justice at so dear a shop as the House of Lords. The law condemned him to a short imprisonment. The gaoler on his own authority substituted capital punishment.’

‘Is it your pleasure sir that I should be vilified and insulted thus to my very face, and by my inferior officer?’ asked Hawes, changing colour.

‘You have nothing to apprehend except from facts,’ was the somewhat cold reply. ‘You are aware I do not share this gentleman’s prejudices.’

‘Would you like to see a man in the act of perishing through the habitual breach of Rule 37 in—— gaol?’

‘Can you show me such a case?’

‘Come with me.’

They entered Strutt’s cell. They found the old man in a state bordering on stupor. When the door was opened he gave a start but speedily relapsed into stupor.

‘Now Mr. Lacy here is a lesson for you. Would to God I could show this sight to all the pedants of science who spend their useless lives in studying the limbs of the crustaceonidunculæ, and are content to know so little about man’s glorious body; and to all

the State dunces who give sordid blockheads the power to wreck the brains and bodies of wicked men in these the clandestine shambles of the nation. Would I could show these and all other numsculls in the land this dying man, that they might write this one great truth in blood on their cold hearts and muddy understandings. Alas! all great truths have to be written in blood ere man will receive them.’

‘But what is your great truth?’ asked Mr. Lacy impatiently.

‘This sir’ replied Mr. Eden putting his finger on the stupified prisoner’s shoulder and keeping it there; ‘that the human body besides its grosser wants of food and covering has its more delicate needs, robbed of which it perishes more slowly and subtly but as surely as when frozen or starved. One of those subtle but absolute conditions of health is light. Without light the body of a blind man pines as pines a tree without light. Tell that to the impostor physical science deep in the crustaceonidunculæ and ignorant of the A B C of man. Without light man’s body perishes, with insufficient light it droops; and here in all these separate shambles is insufficient light, a defect in our system which co-operates with this individual gaoler’s abuse of it. Another of the body’s absolute needs is work. Another is conversation with human beings. If by isolating a vulgar mind that has collected no healthy food to feed on in time of dearth you starve it to a stand-still, the body runs down like a watch that has not been wound up. Against this law of Nature

it is not only impious but idiotic to struggle. Almighty God has made man so, and so he will remain while the world lasts. A little destructive blockhead like this can knock God’s work to pieces—ecce signum—but he can no more alter it while it stands than he can mend it when he has let it down and smashed it. Feel this man’s pulse and look at his eye; life is ebbing from him by a law of Nature as uniform as that which governs the tides.’

‘His pulse is certainly very low, and when I first felt it he was trembling all over.’

‘Oh, that was the agitation of his nerves, we opened the door suddenly.’

‘And did that make a man tremble?’

‘Certainly; that is a well-known symptom of solitary confinement; it is by shattering a man’s nerves all to pieces that it prepares the way for his death, which death comes sometimes in raging lunacy, of which eight men have died under Mr. Hawes’s reign. Here is the list of deaths by lunacy from breach of Rule 37, eight. You will have the particulars by-and-by.’

‘I really don’t see my way through this,’ said Mr. Lacy, ‘let us come to something tangible. What is this punishment jacket that leaves marks of personal violence on so many prisoners?’

Now Hawes had been looking for this machine to hide it, but to his surprise neither he nor Fry could find it.

‘Evans fetch the infernal machine.’

‘Yes your reverence.’

Evans brought the jacket straps and collar from a cell where he had hidden them by Mr. Eden's orders.

'You play the game pretty close parson' said Mr. Hawes with an attempt at a sneer.

'I play to win. I am playing for human lives. This sir is the torture, marks of which you have seen on the prisoners; but your inexperience will not detect at a glance all the diabolical ingenuity and cruelty that lurks in this piece of linen and these strips of leather. However it works thus:—The man being in the jacket its back straps are drawn so tight that the sufferer's breath is impeded, and his heart lungs and liver are forced into unnatural contact. You stare. I must inform you that Nature is a wonderfully close packer. Did you ever unpack a human trunk of its stomach liver lungs and heart, and then try to replace them? I have; and believe me as no gentleman can pack like a shopman so no shopman can pack like Nature. The victim's body and organs being crushed, these two long straps fasten him so tight to the wall that he cannot move to ease the frightful cramps that soon attack him. Then steps in by way of climax this collar three inches and a half high. See it is as stiff as iron, and the miscreants have left the edges unbound that it may do the work of a man-saw as well as a garotte. In this iron three-handed gripe the victim writhes and sobs and moans with anguish, and worse than all loses his belief in God.'

'This is a stern picture' said Mr. Lacy hanging his head.

‘Until what with the freezing of the blood in a body jammed together and flattened against a wall—what with the crushed respiration and the cowed heart a deadly faintness creeps over the victim and he swoons away!’

‘Oh!’

‘It is a lie—a base malignant lie!’ shouted Hawes.

‘I am glad to hear it Mr. Hawes.’

Here the justices with great heat joined in, and told Mr. Lacy he would be much to blame if he accepted any statement made against so respectable a man as Mr. Hawes. Then they all turned indignantly on Mr. Eden. That gentleman’s eyes sparkled with triumph.

‘I have been trying a long time to make him speak, but he was too cunning. It is a lie is it?’

‘Yes, it is a lie.’

‘What is a lie?’

‘The whole thing.’

‘Give me your book Mr. Hawes. What do you mean by “the punishment-jacket,” an entry that appears so constantly here in your handwriting?’

‘I never denied the jacket.’

‘Then what is the lie of which you have accused me? Show me that I may ask your pardon and his I serve for so great a sin as a lie.’

‘It is a lie to say that the jacket tortures the prisoners and makes them faint away; it only confines them. You want to make me out a villain, but it is your own bad heart that makes you think so or say so without thinking it.’

'Now Mr. Lacy I think we have caught our eel. This then is the ground you take ; if it were true that this engine, instead of merely confining men, tortured them to fainting, then you say you would be a villain. You hesitate, sir ; can't you afford to admit that, after all?'

'Yes, I can.'

'But on the other hand you say it is untrue that this engine tortures?'

'I do.'

'Prove that by going into it for one hour. I have seen you put a man in it for six.'

'Now do you really think I am going to make myself a laughing-stock to the whole prison?'

'Well, but consider what a triumph you are denying yourself, to prove me a liar and yourself a true man. It would be the greatest feat of dialectics the world ever saw ; and you need not stand on your dignity—better men than you have been in it, and there goes one of them. Here, Evans, come this way. We want you to go into the punishment-jacket.'

The man recoiled with a ludicrous face of disgust and dismay. Mr. Lacy smiled.

'Now your reverence, don't think of it. I don't don't want to earn no more guineas that way.'

'What does he mean?' asked Mr. Lacy.

'I gave him a guinea to go into it for half an hour, and he calls it a hard bargain.'

'Oh, you have been in it then? Tell me, is it torture or is it only confinement?'

‘Con-finement! con-found such confinement I say. Yes it is torture and the worst of torture. Ask his reverence, he has been in the oven as well as me.’

Mr. Lacy opened his eyes wide.

‘What!’ said he with a half-grin, ‘have you been in it?’

‘That he has sir’ said Evans grinning out in return. ‘Bless you his reverence is not the one to ask a poor man to stand any pain he daren’t face himself.’

‘There there we don’t want to hear about his reverence’ said his reverence very sharply. ‘Mr. Hawes says it is not torture, and therefore he won’t face it. “It is too laughable and painless for me,” says slippery Mr. Hawes. “It *is* torture, and therefore I won’t face it” says the more logical Mr. Evans. But we can cut this knot for you Mr. Lacy. There are in this dungeon a large body of men so steeped in misery, so used to torture for their daily food, that they will not be so nice as Messrs. Hawes and Evans. “Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.” Follow me, sir; and as we go pray cast your eyes over the prison-rules, and see whether you can find “a punishment-jacket.” No, sir, you will not find even a Spanish-collar, or a pillory, or a cross, far less a punishment-jacket which combines those several horrors.’

Mr. Hawes hung back and begged a word with the justices.

‘Gentlemen, you have always been good kind friends to me—give me a word of advice, or at least let me know your pleasure. Shall I resign—shall I fling my

commission in this man's face who comes here to usurp your office and authority?'

'Resign! Nonsense!' said Mr. Williams. 'Stand firm. We will stand by you, and who can hurt you then?'

'You are very good, sir. Without you I couldn't put up with any more of this—to be baited and badgered in my own prison, after serving my queen so many years by sea and land.'

'Poor fellow' said Mr. Woodcock.

'And how can I make head against such a man as Eden—a lawyer in a parson's skin, an orator too that has a hundred words to say to my one?'

'Let him talk till he is hoarse, we will not let him hurt you.'

'Thank you gentlemen thank you. Your wishes have always been my law. You bid me endure all this insolence; honoured by your good opinion and supported by your promise to stand by me I will endure it.'

And Mr. Hawes was seen to throw off the uneasiness he had put on to bind the magistrates to his defence.

'They are coming back again.'

'Who is this with them?'

Mr. Hawes muttered an oath. 'It is a refractory prisoner I had sent to the dark cell. I suppose they will examine him next, and take his word against mine.'

Chorus of visiting justices. 'Shame!'

CHAPTER V.

MR. EDEN had taken Mr. Lacy to the dark cells. Evans, who had no key of them, was sent to fetch Fry to open them.

‘ We will kill two birds with one stone—disinter a patient for our leathern gallows, and a fresh incident of the —— Inquisition. Open this door Mr. Fry.’

The door was opened. A feeble voice uttered a quavering cry of joy that sounded like wailing, and a figure emerged so suddenly and distinctly from the blackness, that Mr. Lacy started. It was Thomas Robinson, who crept out white and shaking, with a wild haggard look. He ran to Mr. Eden like a great girl.

‘ Don’t let me go back—don’t let me go back, sir.’ And the cowed one could hardly help whimpering.

‘ Come, courage my lad,’ rang out Mr. Eden, ‘ your troubles are nearly over. Feel this man’s hand sir.’

‘ How he trembles! Why, he must be chicken-hearted.’

‘ No! only he is one of your men of action, not of

passive fortitude. He is imaginative too, and suffers remorse for his crimes without the soothing comfort of penitence. Twenty-four hours of that hole would deprive him or any such nature of the light of reason.'

'Is this a mere opinion or do you propose to offer me proof?'

'Six men driven by this means alone to the lunatic asylum, of whom two died there soon after.'

'Hum! of what nature is your proof? I cannot receive assertion.'

'Entries made at the time by a man of unimpeachable honesty.'

'Indeed!'

'Who hates me and adores Mr. Hawes.'

'Very well, Mr. Eden' replied the other keenly 'whatever you support by such evidence as that I will accept as fact and act upon it.'

'Done!'

'Done!' and Mr. Lacy smiled good-humouredly but it must be owned incredulously. 'Is that proof at hand?' he added.

'It is. But one thing at a time—the leathern gallows is the iniquity we are unearthing at present. Ah! here is Mr. Hawes and his subordinates.'

'Subordinates?'

'You will see why I call them so.'

Mr. Williams. 'I trust you will not accept the evidence of a refractory prisoner against an honest well-tried officer, whose conduct for two years past we have watched and approved.'

Mr. Lacy replied with dignity—

‘Your good opinion of Mr. Hawes shall weigh in his favour at every part of the evidence, but you must not dictate to me the means by which I am to arrive at the truth.’

Mr. Williams bit his lip and was red and silent.

‘But your reverence’ cried Robinson ‘don’t let me be called a refractory prisoner when you know I am not.’

‘Then what were you in the black hole for?’

‘For obeying orders.’

‘Nonsense! hum! Explain.’

‘His reverence said to me, “You are a good writer; write your own life down. See how you like it when you look at it with reason’s eye instead of passion’s all spread out before you in its true colours. Tell the real facts—no false coin, nor don’t put any sentiments down you don’t feel to please me—I shall only despise you,” said his reverence. Well sir I am not a fool, and so of course I could see how wise his reverence was, and how much good might come to my poor sinful soul by doing his bidding; and I said a little prayer he had taught me against a self-deceiving heart—his reverence is always letting fly at self-deception—and then I sat down and I said, “Now I won’t tell a single lie or make myself a pin better or worse than I really am. I’ll do what such a wise and good saint bids me.” Well, gentlemen, I hadn’t written two pages when Mr. Fry found me out and told the governor, and the governor had me shoved into the black-hole where you found me.’

'This is Mr. Fry I think?'

'My name is Fry.'

'Was this prisoner sent to the black-hole merely for writing his life by the chaplain's orders?'

'You must ask the governor sir. My business is to report offences and to execute orders; I don't give 'em.'

'Mr. Hawes, was he sent to the black-hole for doing what the chaplain had set him to do by way of a moral lesson?'

'He was sent for scribbling a pack of lies without my leave.'

'What! when he had the permission of your superior officer.'

'Of my superior officer?'

'Your superior in the department of instruction I mean. Can you doubt that he is so with these rules before you? Let me read you one of them:—

"Rule 18. All prisoners, including those sentenced to hard labour, are to have such time allowed them for instruction as the chaplain may think proper, whether such instruction withdraw them from their labour for a time or not.

'And again, by "*Rule 30. Each prisoner is to have every means of moral and religious instruction the chaplain shall select for each as suitable.*" So that you have passed out of your own department into a higher department, which was a breach of discipline, and you have affronted the head of that department and strained your authority to undermine his, and this in the face of Rule 18, which establishes this principle: that should

the severities of the prison claim a prisoner by your mouth, and religious or moral instruction claim him by the chaplain's, your department must give way to the higher department.’

‘This is very new to me, sir; but if it is the law—’

‘Why, you see it is the law, printed for your guidance. I undo your act Mr. Hawes; the prisoner Robinson will obey the chaplain in all things that relate to religious or moral instruction, and he will write his life as ordered, and he is not to be put to hard labour for twenty-four hours. By this means he will recover his spirits and the time and moral improvement you have made him lose. You hear, sir?’ added he very sharply.

‘I hear’ said Hawes sulkily.

‘Go on with your evidence Mr. Eden.’

‘Robinson my man you see that machine?’

‘Ugh! yes I see it.’

‘For two months I have been trying to convince Mr. Hawes that engine is illegal. I failed; but I have been more fortunate with this gentleman who comes from the Home Office. He has not taken as many minutes to see it is unlawful.’

‘Stop a bit, Mr. Eden. It is clearly illegal, but the torture is not proved.’

‘Nor ever will be’ put in Mr. Hawes.

‘So then, Robinson, no man on earth has the right to put you into that machine.’

‘Hurrah!’

‘It is therefore as a favour that I ask you to go into it to show its operation.’

'A favour, your reverence, to you? I am ready in a minute.'

Robinson was jammed, throttled, and nailed in the man-press. Mr. Lacy stood in front of him and eyed him keenly and gravely.

'They seem very fond of you these fellows.'

'Can you give your eyes to that sight and your ears to me?' asked Mr. Eden.

'I can.'

'Then I introduce to you a new character—Mr. Fry. Mr. Fry is a real character, unlike those of romance and melodrama, which are apt to be either a streak of black paint, or else a streak of white paint. Mr. Fry is variegated. He is a moral magpie; he is, if possible, as devoid of humanity as his chief; but to balance this defect, he possesses, all to himself, a quality, a very high quality, called Honesty.'

'Well, that is a high quality and none too common.'

'He is one of those men to whom veracity is natural. He would hardly know how to tell a falsehood. They fly about him in this place like hailstones, but I never saw one come from him.'

'Stay! does he side with you or with Mr. Hawes in this unfortunate difference?'

'With me!' cried Mr. Hawes eagerly.

Mr. Eden bowed assent.

'Hum!'

'This honest Nero is zealous according to his light; he has kept a strict record of the acts and events of the gaol for four years past; *i.e.*, rather more than two

years of Captain O'Connor's gaolership, and somewhat less than two years of the present gaoler. Such a journal, rigorously kept out of pure love of truth by such a man, is invaluable. There no facts are likely to be suppressed or coloured, since the record was never intended for any eye but his own. I am sure Mr. Fry will gratify you with a sight of this journal. Oblige me Mr. Fry!

‘Certainly sir! certainly!’ replied Fry swelling with importance and gratified surprise.

‘Bring it me at once, if you please.’

Fry went with alacrity for his journal.

‘Mr. Lacy’ said Mr. Eden with a slight touch of reproach ‘you can read not faces only but complexions. You read in my yellow face and sunken eye—prejudice; what do you read here?’ and he wheeled like lightning and pointed to Mr. Hawes, whose face and very lips were then seen to be the colour of ashes.

The poor wretch tried to recover composure, and retort defiance; but the effort came too late, his face had been seen, and once seen, that look of terror anguish and hatred was never to be forgotten.

‘What is the matter, Mr. Hawes?’

‘W—W—When I think of my long services, and the satisfaction I have given to my superiors—and now my turnkey's journal to be taken and believed against mine.’

(*Chorus of Justices*). ‘It is a shame!’

Mr. Eden (very sharply). ‘Against yours? what

makes him think it will be against his? The man is his admirer, and an honest man. What injustice has he to dread from such a source?

Mr. Lacy. 'I really cannot understand your objection to a man's evidence whose bias lies your way; and I must say, it speaks well for Mr. Eden that he has proposed this man in evidence.'

At this juncture, the magistrates, after a short consultation, informed Mr. Lacy that they had business of more importance to transact, and could give no more time to what appeared to them an idle and useless inquiry.

'At all events, gentlemen,' replied Mr. Lacy 'I trust you will not leave the gaol. I am not here to judge Mr. Hawes, but to see whether Mr. Eden's demand for a formal inquiry into his acts ought to be granted or refused. Now unless the evidence takes some new turn I incline to think I must favour the inquiry; that is to say, should the chaplain persist in demanding it.'

'Which I shall.'

'Should a royal commission be appointed to sit here, I should naturally wish to consult you as to the component members of the commission; and it is my wish to pay you the compliment usual in such cases of selecting one of the three commissioners from your body. But one question gentlemen before you go. Have you complied with No. 1 of these your rules? Have you visited every prisoner in his or her cell once a month?'

‘Certainly not!’

‘I am sorry to hear it. Of course at each visit you have closely examined this the gaoler’s book, a record of his acts and the events of the gaol?’

‘Portions of it are read to us; this is a form which I believe is never omitted,—is it Mr. Hawes?’

‘Never, gentlemen!’

‘“Portions!” and “a form!” what then are your acts of supervision? Do you examine the turnkeys, and compare their opinions with the gaoler’s?’

‘We would not be guilty of such ungentlemanly behaviour!’ replied Mr. Williams, who had been long-ing for some time to give Mr. Lacy a slap.

‘Do you examine the prisoners apart, so that there can be no intimidation of them?’

‘We always take Mr. Hawes into the cells with us.’

‘Why do you do that? pray!’

‘We conceive that nothing would be gained by encouraging the refuse of mankind to make frivolous complaints against their best friend.’

Here the speaker and his mates wore a marked air of self-satisfaction.

‘Well, sir! has the present examination in no degree shaken your confidence in Mr. Hawes’s discretion?’

‘Not in the least.’

‘Nor in your own mode of scrutinizing his acts?’

‘Not in the least.’

‘That is enough!—gentlemen, I need detain you no

longer from the business you have described as more important than this !

Mr. Lacy shrugged his shoulders. Mr. Eden smiled to him, and said quietly—

‘As they were in the days of Shakespeare so they were in the days of Fielding ; as they were in the days of Fielding so they are in the days of light ; and as they are now so will they remain until they are swept away from the face of the soil. (Keep your eye on Mr. Hawes, edging away there so adroitly.) It is not their fault, it is their nature ; their constitution is rotten ; in building them the State ignored Nature, as Hawes ignores her in his self-invented discipline.’

‘What do you mean, sir ?’

‘That no *body* of men ever gave for nothing anything worth anything nor ever will. Now knowledge of law is worth something ; zeal independent judgment honesty humanity diligence are worth something (are you watching Mr. Hawes, sir ?) ; yet the State, greedy goose, hopes to get them out of a body of men for nothing !’

‘Hum ! Why has Mr. Hawes retired ?’

‘You know as well as I do.’

‘Oh ! do I ?’

‘Yes, sir ! the man’s terror when Fry’s journal was proposed in evidence, and his manner of edging away obliquely to the direction Fry took, were not lost on a man of your intelligence.’

‘If you think that, why did you not stop him till Fry came back with the book ?’

'I had my reasons; meantime we are not at a stand-still. Here is an attested copy of the journal in question; and here is Mr. Hawes's log-book. Fry's book intended for no mortal eye but his own; Hawes's concocted for inspection.'

'I see a number of projecting marks pasted into Fry's journal!'

'Yes, sir; on some of these marks are written the names of remarkable victims recurring at intervals; on others are inscribed the heads of villainy,—“the black-hole,” “starvation,” “thirst,” “privation of exercise,” “of bed,” “of gas,” “of chapel,” “of human converse,” “inhuman threats,” and the infernal torture called the “punishment-jacket.” Somewhat on the plan of “Watt's Bibliotheca Britannica;” so that you can at will trace any one of Mr. Hawes's illegal punishments, and see it running like a river of blood through many hapless names; or you can, if you like it better, track a fellow-creature dripping blood from punishment to punishment from one dark page to another, till release lunacy or death closes the list of his recorded sufferings.'

Aided by Mr. Eden, who whirled over the leaves of Mr. Hawes's log-book for him, Mr. Lacy compared several pages of the two books. The following is merely a selected specimen of the entries that met his eye:—

MR. FRY.

Joram: Writing on his can
—bread and water.

Joram: Bread and water.

MR. HAWES.

Joram: Refractory — bread
and water.

MR. FRY.

Joram : Bread and water.

Joram : Crank not performed—bread and water.

Joram : Punishment-jacket.

Joram : Refractory—crank, bread and water.

Joram : Attempted suicide; insensible when found; had cut off pieces of his hair to send to his friends—sick list.

Josephs : Crank not performed; says he could not turn the crank No. 9; punishment-jacket.

Tomson : Communicating in chapel—dark cell 12 hours.

Tomson : Bread and water.

Tomson : Crank not performed; punishment-jacket.

Tomson : Dark cells.

Tomson : No chapel.

Tomson : Dark cells.

Tomson : Melancholy.

Tomson : Very strange.

Tomson : Removed to lunatic asylum.

Tanner : (9 years old) Caught up at window; asked what he did there; said he wanted to feel the light—jacket, and bread and water three days.

Tanner : For repining—chapel and gas stopped until content.

MR. HAWES.

Joram : Refractory—crank; bread and water.

Joram : Refractory — bread and water.

Joram : Feigned suicide; cause, religious despondency—put on sick-list.

Josephs : Refractory; said he would not work on crank 9; punishment-jacket.

Tomson : Communicating—dark cells.

Tomson : Refractory—jacket.

Tomson : Afflicted with remorse for past crimes—surgeon.

Tomson : Removed to asylum.

Tanner : Caught up at window; answered insolently—jacket.

Tanner : Refractory language—forbidden chapel until reformation.

'Can I see such a thing as a prisoner who has attempted suicide?' inquired he with lingering incredulity.

'Yes! there are three on this landing. Come first to Joram, of whom Mr. Hawes writes that he made a sham attempt on his life in a fit of religious despondency, Mr. Fry, that having been jacketed, and put on bread and water for several days, he became depressed in spirits, and made a real attempt on his life. Ah! here is Mr. Fry, he is coming this way to tell you his first falsehood. Hawes has been all this while persuading him to it.'

'Where is your journal Mr. Fry?'

'Well sir' replied Fry hanging his head 'I can't show it you. I lent it to a friend now I remember, and he has taken it out of the gaol; but' added he with a sense of relief, 'you can ask me any questions you like and I'll answer them all one as my book.'

'Well then was Joram's attempt at suicide a real or a feigned one?'

'Well I should say it was a real one. I found him insensible and he did not come to for best part of a quarter of an hour.'

'Open his cell.'

'Joram I am here from the Secretary of State to ask you some questions. Answer them truly and without fear. Some months ago you made an attempt on your life.'

The prisoner shuddered and hung his head.

'Don't be discouraged Joram' put in Mr. Eden

kindly, 'this gentleman is not a harsh judge, he will make allowances.'

'Thank you gentlemen.

'What made you attempt your life?' persisted Lacy.
'Was it from religious despondency?'

'That it was not. What did I know about religion before his reverence here came to the gaol? No sir I was clammed to death.'

'Clammed?'

'Yes sir clammed and no mistake.'

'North-country word for starved' explained Mr. Eden.

'No, sir, I was starved as well. It was very cold weather, and they gave me nothing but a roll of bread no bigger than my fist once a day for best part of a week. So being starved with cold and clammed with hunger I knew I couldn't live many hours more, and then the pain in my vitals was so dreadful sir I was obliged to cut it short. Ay! ay! your reverence, I know it was very wicked, but what was I to do? If I hadn't attempted my life I shouldn't be alive now. A poor fellow doesn't know what to do in such a place as this.'

'Well' said Mr. Lacy 'I promise you your food shall never be tampered with again.'

'Thank you sir. Oh! I have nothing to complain of now sir; they have never clammed me since I attempted my life.'

Mr. Eden. 'Suicide is at a premium here.'

'What was your offence?' asked Lacy.

'Writing on my can.'

‘What did you write on the can?’

‘I wrote “I want to speak to the governor.”’

‘Couldn’t you ring and ask to see him?’

‘Ring and ask? I had rung half-a-dozen times and asked to see him and could not get to see him. My hand was blistered and I wanted to ask him to put me on a different sort of work ’till such time as it could get leave to heal.’

‘Now sir,’ said Mr. Eden, ‘observe the sequence of iniquity. A refractory gaoler defies the discipline of the prison. He breaks Rule 37 and other rules by which he is ordered to be always accessible to a prisoner. The prisoner being in a strait, through which the gaoler alone can guide him, begs for an interview; unable to obtain this in his despair he writes one innocent line on his can imploring the gaoler to see him. None of the beasts say “what has he written?” they say only here be scratches, and they put him on bread and water for an illegal period; and Mr. Hawes’s new and illegal interpretation of “bread and water,” is aimed at his life. I mean that instead of receiving three times per diem a weight of bread equal to the weight of his ordinary diets (which is clearly the intention of the bread and water statute), he has once a day four ounces of bread. So because a refractory gaoler breaks the discipline, a prisoner with whom no breach of the discipline *originated* is feloniously put to death unless he “cuts it short” by that which in every spot of the earth but—gaol is a deadly crime in Heaven’s eyes—self-murder.’

'What an eye your reverence ha' got for things! Well now it doesn't sound quite fair does it? but stealing is a dog's trick, and if a man behaves like a dog he must look to be treated like one; and he will be too.'

'That is right, Joram; you look at it from that point of view, and we will look at it from another.'

'Open Naylor's cell.'

'Naylor what drove you to attempt suicide?'

'Oh! you know, sir.'

'But this gentleman does not.'

'Well, gents, they had been at me a pretty while one way and another; they put me in the jacket 'till I fainted away.'

'Stop a minute, is the jacket very painful?'

'There is nothing in the world like it, sir.'

'What is its effect? What sort of pain?'

'Why? all sorts! it crushes your very heart. Then it makes you ache from your hair to your heel, till you would thank and bless any man to knock you on the head. Then it takes you by the throat and pinches you and rasps you all at one time. However I don't think but what I could have stood up against that, if I had had food enough; but how can a chap face trouble and pain and hard labour on a crumb a day? However what finally screwed up my stocking altogether gents, was their taking away my gas. It was the dark winter nights, and there was me set with an empty belly and the cell like a grave. So then I turned a

little queer in the head by all accounts, and I saw things that—hem!—didn't suit my complaint at all, you know.'

'What things?'

'Well, gents, it is all over now, but it makes me shiver still, so I don't care to be reminded; let us drop it if it is all the same to you.'

'But Naylor, for the sake of other poor fellows and to oblige me.'

'Oh! your reverence if I can oblige you that alters the case entirely. Well then, sir, if you must know, I saw "Child of Hell" wrote in great letters of fire all over that side of the cell. Always every evening this was all my society as the saying is; "Child of Hell" wrote ten times brighter than gas.'

'Couldn't you shut your eyes and go to sleep?' said Mr. Lacy.

'How could I sleep? and I did shut my eyes, and then the letters they came through my eye-lids. So when this fell on the head of all my troubles I turned wild, and I said to myself one afternoon, "Now here is my belly empty and nothing coming to it, and there is the sun a setting, and by-and-by my cell will be brim-full of hell-fire, let me end my troubles and get one night's rest if I never see another." So I hung myself up to the bar by my hammock-strap, and that is all I remember except finding myself on my back with Mr. Fry and a lot round me some coaxing and some cursing; and when I saw where I was I fell a crying and blubbering, to think that I had so nearly broke prison and there

they had got me still. I dare say Mr. Fry remembers how I took on.'

'Ay my man I remember we got no thanks for bringing you to.'

'I was a poor unconverted sinner then' replied Mr. Naylor demurely 'and didn't know my fault and the consequences; but I thank you now with all my heart Mr. Fry sir.'

'I am to understand then that you accuse the gaoler of driving you to suicide by unlawful severities?'

'No sir I don't. I only tell you how it happened, and you shouldn't have asked me if you didn't care to know; and as for blaming folk the man I blame the most is John Naylor. His reverence there has taught me to look at home. If I hadn't robbed honest folk I shouldn't have robbed myself of character and liberty and health, and Mr. Hawes wouldn't have robbed me of food and light and life wellnigh. Certainly there is a deal of ignorance and stupidity in this here gaol. The governor has no head-piece; can't understand that a prisoner is made out of the same stuff as he is—skin and belly heart soul bones an' all. I should say he wasn't fit to be trusted with the lives of a litter of pigs, let alone a couple of hundred men and women; but all is one for that; if he was born without any gumption as the saying is, I wasn't, and I didn't ought to be in a fool's power; that is my fault entirely, not the fool's; ain't it now? If I hadn't come to the mill the miller would never have grinded me! I sticks to that!'

‘Well said, Naylor. Come sir One higher than the State takes precedence here; we must on no account shake a Christian frame of mind or rekindle a sufferer’s wrongs. Yes Naylor, forgive and you shall be forgiven. I am pleased with you, greatly pleased with you my poor fellow. There is my hand!’

Naylor took his reverence’s hand and his very forehead reddened with pride and pleasure at so warm a word of praise from the revered mouth. They went out of the cell. Being now in the corridor Mr. Eden addressed the Government official thus :

‘My proofs draw to a close. I could multiply instances ad infinitum, but what is the use? If these do not convince you you would not believe though one rose from the dead. What do I say? Have not Naylor and Joram and many others come back from the dead to tell you by what roads they were driven there? One example remains to be shown: to a philosophical mind it is no stronger than the rest; but there are many men who can receive no very strong impression except through their senses. You may be one of these; and it is my duty to give your judgment every aid. Where is Mr. Fry? He has left us.’

‘I am coming to attend you sir,’ cried Evans from above. ‘Mr. Fry is gone to the governor.’

‘Where are we going?’ asked Mr. Lacy.

‘To examine a prisoner whom the gaoler tortured with the jacket and starved, and ended by robbing him of his gas and his bed contrary to law. Evans,

since you are here, relate all that happened to Edward Josephs on the fourth of this month and mind you don't exaggerate.'

'Well, sir, they had been at him for near a month overtaking him and then giving him the jacket, and starving him and overtaking him again on his empty stomach till the poor lad was a living skeleton. On the fourth the governor put him in the jacket, and there he was kept till he swooned.'

'Ah!'

'Then they flung two buckets of water over him and that brought him to. Then they sent him to his cell and there he was in his wet clothes. Then him being there shaking with cold, the governor ordered his gas to be taken away, his hands were shaking over it for a little warmth when they robbed him of that bit o' comfort.'

'Hum!'

'Contrary to law!' put in Mr. Eden.

'Well, sir, he was a quiet lad not given to murmur, but at losing his gas he began to cry out so loud you might hear him all over the prison.'

'What did he cry?'

'Sir, he cried MURDER!'

'Go on.'

'Then I came to him and found him shivering and dripping, and crying fit to break his poor heart.'

'And did you do nothing for him?'

'I did what I could, sir. I took him and twisted his bed-clothes so tight round him the air could not get

in, and before I left him his sobs went down and he looked like warm and sleeping after all his troubles. Well, sir, they can tell you better that did the job, but it seems the governor sent another turnkey called Hodges to take away his bed from under him.’

‘Oh!’

‘Well sir! oh dear me! I hope, your reverence, I shall never have to tell this story again for it chokes me every time.’

And the man was unable to go on for a while.

‘Well, sir, the poor thing it seems didn’t cry out as he had about the gas, he took it quite quiet—that might have let them know, but some folk can see nothing till it is too late—and he gave Hodges his hand to show he bore him no malice. Eh dear! eh dear! Would to Heaven I had never seen this wicked place!’

‘Wicked place indeed!’ said Mr. Lacy solemnly.

‘You make me almost dread to ask the result.’

‘You shall see the result. Evans!’

Evans opened cell 15, and he and Mr. Eden stood sorrowful aside while Mr. Lacy entered the cell. The first thing he saw was a rude coffin standing upright by the window, the next a dead body lying stark upon a mattress on the floor. The official uttered a cry like the scream of a woman!

‘What is this? How dare you bring me to such a place as this?’

‘This is that Edward Josephs whose sufferings you have heard and pitied.’

'Poor wretch! Heaven forgive us! What did he—did he—?'

'He took one step to meet inevitable death—he hanged himself that same night by his handkerchief to this bar. Turn his poor body Evans. See, sir, here is Mr. Hawes's mark upon his back. These livid stripes are from the infernal jacket and helped lash him into his grave. You are ill. Here! some wine from my flask! You will faint else!'

'Thank you! Yes, I was rather faint. It is passed. Mr. Eden, I find my life has been spent among words—things of such terrible significance are new to me. God forgive us! how came this to pass in England in the nineteenth century? The —— scoundrel!'

'Kick him out of the gaol, but do not swear; it is a sin. By removing him from this his great temptation we may save even his blood-stained soul. But the souls of his victims? Oh sir when a good man is hurried to his grave our lamentations are natural but unwise; but think what he commits who hurries thieves and burglars and homicides unprepared before their eternal Judge. In this poor boy lay the materials of a saint—mild docile grateful believing. I was weaning him to all that is good when I fell sick. The sufferings I saw and could not stop they made me sick. You did not know that when you let my discoloured cheeks prejudice you *against* my truth. Oh! I forgive you dear sir! Yes Heaven is inscrutable; for had I not fallen ill—yes I was leading you up to Heaven, was I not? Oh my lost sheep! my poor lost sheep!'

And the faithful shepherd at the bottom of whose wit and learning lay a heart simpler than beats in any dunce forgot Hawes and everything else and began to mourn by the dead body of his wandering sheep.

Then in that gloomy abode of blood and tears Heaven wrought a miracle. One who for twenty years past had been an official became a man for full five minutes. Light burst on him—Nature rushed back upon her truant son and seized her long-forgotten empire. The frost and reserve of office melted like snow in summer before the sun of religion and humanity. How unreal and idle appeared now the twenty years gone in tape and feeble circumlocution! Away went his life of shadows—his career of watery polysyllables meandering through the great desert into the Dead Sea. He awoke from his desk and saw the corpse of an Englishman murdered by routine, and the tears of a man of God dripping upon it.

Then his soul burst its desk and his heart broke its polysyllables and its tapen bonds, and the man of office came quickly to the man of God and seized his hand with both his which shook very much, and pressed it again and again and again, and his eyes glistened and his voice faltered.

‘This shall never be again. How these tears honour you! but they cut me to the heart. There! there! I believe every word you have told me now. Be comforted! you are not to blame! there were always villains in the world and fools like us that could not understand or believe in an apostle like you. We are

all in fault, but not you! Be comforted! Law and order shall be restored this very day and none of these poor creatures shall suffer violence again or wrong of any sort, by God!

So these two grasped hands and pledged faith and for a while at least joined hearts.

Mr. Eden thanked him with a grace and dignity all his own. Then he said with a winning sweetness, 'Go now, my dear sir, and do your duty. Act for once upon an impulse. At this moment you see things as you will see them when you come to die. A light from Heaven shines on your path at this moment. Walk by it ere the world dims it. Go and leave me to repent the many unchristian tempers I have shown you in one short hour, my heat and bitterness and arrogance, in this solemn place.'

His unchristian temper! poor soul!

'There take me to the justices Mr. Evans, and you follow me as soon as you like. Yes my worthy friend I will act upon an impulse for once—Ugh!' wheeling rapidly out of the cell as unlike his past self as a pin-wheel in a shop drawer and ditto ignited he met at the very door Mr. Hawes!

'You have been witnessing a sad sight sir, and one that nobody, I assure you, deplores more than I do' said Mr. Hawes in a gentle and feeling tone.

Mr. Lacy answered Mr. Hawes by looking him all over from head to foot and back, then looking sternly into his eyes he turned his back on him sharp and left him standing there without a word.

CHAPTER VI.

THE gaoler had been out-witted by the priest. Hawes had sneaked after Fry to beg him for heaven's sake, that was the phrase he used, not to produce his journal. Fry thought this very hard, and it took Hawes ten minutes to coax him over. Mr. Eden had calculated on this, and worked with the attested copy, while Hawes was wasting his time suppressing the original. Hawes was too cunning to accompany Fry back to Mr. Lacy; he allowed five minutes more to elapse: all which time his antagonist was pumping truth into the judge a gallon a stroke. At last up came Mr. Hawes to protect himself and baffle the parson: he came, he met Mr. Lacy at the dead prisoner's door, and read his defeat.

Mr. Lacy joined the justices in their room.

'I have one question to ask you, gentlemen, before I go:—How many attempts at suicide were made in this gaol under Captain O'Connor while sole gaoler?'

'I don't remember' replied Mr. Williams.

'It would be odd if you did, for no one such attempt took place under him.'

'Are you aware how many attempts at suicide took place during the two years that this Hawes governed a part of the gaol, being kept in some little check by O'Connor, but not much, as unfortunately you encouraged the inferior officer to defy his superior? Five attempts at suicide during this period, gentlemen. And now do you know how many such attempts have occurred since Mr. Hawes has been sole gaoler?'

'I really don't know. Prisoners are always shamming,' replied Mr. Woodcock.

'I do not allude to feigned attempts, of which there have been several, but to desperate attempts; some of which have left the prisoner insensible, some have resulted in his death—how many of these?'

'Four or five I believe.'

'Ah, you have not thought it worth while to inquire. Hum!—well fourteen at least. Come in Mr. Eden.

'Gentlemen, you have neglected your duty; making every allowance for your inexperience, it still is clear that you have undertaken the supervision of a gaol, and yet have exercised no actual supervision; even now the life or death of the prisoners seems to you a matter of indifference. If you are reckless on such a point as this, what chance have the minor circumstances of their welfare of being watched by you? and frankly I am puzzled to conceive what you proposed to yourselves when you undertook an office so important and requiring so great vigilance. I say this, gentlemen, merely to explain why I cannot have the pleasure I did

promise myself, of putting one of your names into the royal commission which will sit upon this prison in compliance with the chaplain’s petition.’

Mr. Eden bowed gratefully, and his point being formally gained, he hurried away to make up for lost time, and visit his longing prisoners. While he passed like sunshine from cell to cell, Mr. Lacy took a note or two in solemn silence, and the injustices conferred.

Mr. Palmer whispered ‘We had better have taken Mr. Eden’s advice.’

The other two snorted ill-assured defiance.

Mr. Lacy looked up. ‘You will hold yourselves in readiness to be examined before the commission.’

At this moment Mr. Hawes walked into the room without his mask, and in his own brutal voice—the voice he spoke to prisoners with—addressed himself with great insolence of manner to Mr. Lacy. ‘Don’t trouble yourself to hold commissions over me. I think myself worth a great deal more to the government than they have ever been to me. What they give me is little enough for what I have given them, and when insults are added to a man of honour and an old servant of the Queen, he flings his commission in your face;’ and the unveiled ruffian raised his voice to a roar, and with his hand flung an imaginary commission into Mr. Lacy’s face, who drew back astounded; then resuming his honeyed manner Hawes turned to the justices. ‘I return into your hands gentlemen the office I received from you. I thank you for the support you

have afforded me in my endeavours to substitute discipline for the miserable laxity and slovenliness and dirt we found here; and your good opinion will always console me for the insults I have received from a crack-brained parson and his tools in the gaol and out of it.'

'Your resignation is accepted' said Mr. Lacy coldly, and as your connexion with —— gaol is now ended, in virtue of my powers from the Secretary of State which I here produce I give you the use of the gaoler's house for a week that you may have time to move your effects, but for many reasons it is advisable that you should not remain in the gaol a single hour. Be so good, therefore as to quit the gaol as soon as you conveniently can. One of the turnkeys shall assist you to convey to your house whatever you have in this building.'

'I have nothing to take out of the gaol man' replied Hawes rudely, 'except,' and here he did a bit of pathos and dignity, 'my zeal for her Majesty's service and my integrity.'

'Ah,' replied Lacy quietly, 'you won't want any help to carry them.'

Mr. Hawes left the room bowing to the justices and ostentatiously ignoring the government official.

Mr. Williams shouted after him.

'He carries our respect wherever he goes,' said this magistrate with a fidelity worthy a better cause.

The other two hung their heads and did not echo their chief. The tide was turned against Gaoler

Hawes, and these two were not the articles to swim against a stream even though that stream was truth.

Mr. Hawes took his time. He shook hands with Fry, bade him farewell with regret. Who is there that somebody does not contrive to like? And rejecting even this mastiff's company he made a gloomy, solitary progress through the prison for the last time.

‘How clean and beautiful it all is! it wasn't like that when I came to it, and it never will again.’

Some gleams of remorse began to flit about that thick scull and self-deceiving heart, for punishment suggests remorse to sordid natures. But his strong and abiding feeling was a sincere and profound sense of ill-usage—long service—couldn't overlook a single error—ungrateful government, etc.

‘Prison go to the devil now, and serve them right.’

At last he drew near the outer court, and there he met a sight that raised all the fiend within him. There was Mr. Eden ushering Strutt into the garden, and telling Evans the old man was to pass his whole days there till he was better.

‘So that is the way you keep the rules now you have undermined me! No cell at all. I thought what you would come to. You haven't been long getting there—’

‘Mr. Hawes,’ replied the other with perfect good temper, ‘Rule 34 of this prison enjoins that every prisoner shall take daily as much exercise in the open air as is necessary for his health. You have violated this rule so long that now Strutt's health requires him

to pass many more hours in the air than he otherwise would; he is dying for air and amusement, and he shall have both sooner than die for the want of them or anything I can give him.'

'And what is it to *him*?' retorted Evans with rude triumph; 'he is no longer an officer of this gaol; he has got the sack and orders to quit into the bargain.'

Fear is entertained that Mr. Evans had listened more or less at the door of the justices' room.

'Is this so sir?' asked Mr. Eden gravely politely and without a shadow of visible exultation.

'You know it is you sneaking undermining villain; you have weathered on me, you have out-manœuvred me. When was an honest soldier a match for a parson?'

'Ah!' cried Mr. Eden; 'then run to the gate, Evans, and let the men into the gaol with the printing-press and the looms. They have been waiting four hours for this.'

Hawes turned black with rage.

'O I know you made sure of winning; a black-guard that loads the dice can always do that. Your triumph won't be long. I was in this gaol honoured and respected for four years till you came. You won't be four months before you are kicked out, and no one to say a good word for you. A pretty Christian! to suborn my own servants and rob me of my place and make me a beggar in my old age, a man! you are not worthy to serve under, a man that served his country by sea and land before you were whelped, ye

black hypocrite. You a Christian! you? If I thought that I’d turn Atheist or anything you poor back-biting tale-telling sneaking undermining false witness bearing—’

‘Unhappy man’ cried Mr. Eden; ‘turn those perverse eyes from the faults of others to your own danger. The temptations under which you fell end here; then let their veil fall from your eyes, and you may yet bless those who came between your soul and its everlasting ruin. Your victims are dead; their eternal fate is fixed by you. Heaven is more merciful, it has not struck you dead by your victim’s side; it gives you the greatest sinner of all a chance to escape. Seize that chance. Waste no time in passion and petulance, think only of your forfeited soul. Madman, to your knees! What! dare you die as you have lived these three years past? dare you die abhorred of Heaven? Fool! see yourself as every eye on earth and in Heaven sees you. The land contains no criminal so black as you. Other homicides have struck hastily on provocation or stung by injury, or thrust or drawn by some great passion, but you have deliberately gnawed away men’s lives. Others have seen their one victim die, but you have looked on your many victims dying yet not spared them. Other homicides’ hands are stained, but yours are steeped in blood. To your knees MAN-slayer! I dare not promise you that a life given to penitence and charity will save so foul a soul, but it may, for Heaven’s mercy is infinite. Seize on that small chance. Seize

it like one who feels Satan clutching him and dragging him down to eternal flames. Life is short, eternity is close, judgment is sure. A few short years and you must meet Edward Josephs again before the Eternal Judge. What a tribunal to face, your victims opposite you! There the longstanding prejudices that save you from a felon's death here will avail you nothing. There the quibbles that pass current on earth will be blasted with the lips that dare to utter and the hearts that coin them. Before Him who has neither body nor parts yet created all the forms of matter vainly will you pretend that you did not slay, because forsooth the weapons with which you struck at life were invisible and not to be comprehended by a vulgar shallow sensual earthly judge. There too the imperfection of human language will yield no leaf of shelter.

'Hope not to shift the weight of guilt upon poor Josephs there. On earth muddle-heads will call his death and the self-murderer's by one name of "suicide," and therefore dream the two acts were one; but you cannot gull Omniscience with a word—the wise man's counter, and the money of a fool. Be not deceived! As Rosamond took poison in her hand, and drank it with her own lips, and died by her own act, yet died assassinated by her rival, so died Josephs. As men taken by pirates at sea, and pricked with cold steel till in despair and pain they fling themselves into the sea, so died Josephs and his fellows murdered by you. Be not deceived! I, a minister of the gospel of

mercy—I, whose character you know leans towards charity, tell you that if you die impenitent, so surely as the sun shines and the Bible is true, the murder of Edward Josephs and his brothers will damn your soul to the flames of hell for ever and for ever and for ever!

‘Begone then, poor miserable creature! Do not look behind you. Fly from this scene where crime and its delusions still cling round your brain and your self-deceiving heart. Waste no more time with me; a minute lost may be a soul lost. The avenger of blood is behind you. Run quickly to your own home, go up to your secret chamber, and there fall down upon your knees before your God, and cry loud and long to him for pardon. Cry mightily for help—cry humbly and groaning for the power to repent. Away! away! Wash those red hands and that black soul in years and years of charity, in tears and tears of penitence, and in our Redeemer’s blood. Begone, and darken and trouble us here no more.’

The cowed gaoler shrank and cowered before the thunder and lightning of the priest, who mild by nature was awful when he rebuked an impenitent sinner out of holy writ. He slunk away, his knees trembling under him, and the first fiery seeds of remorse sown in his dry heart. He met the printing-press coming in, and the loom following it (naturally); he scowled at them and groaned. Evans held the door open for him with a look of joy that stirred all his bile again. He turned on the very threshold, and spat a

volley of oaths upon Evans. Evans at this put down his head like a bull, and running fiercely with the huge door, slammed it close on his heel with such ferocity, that the report rang like a thunder-clap through the entire building, and the ex-gaoler was in the street.

Five minutes more the printing-press and loom were re-installed, and the punishment-jacket packed up and sent to London to the Home Office. Ten minutes more the cranks were examined by the artist in iron Mr. Eden had sent for, and all condemned, it being proved that the value of their resistance stated on their lying faces was scarce one-third of their actual resistance. So much for unerring * science !

Five minutes more Mr. Eden had placed in Mr. Lacy's hands a list of prisoners to whom a free pardon ought now to be extended, some having suffered a somewhat shorter period but a greater weight of misery than the judges had contemplated in their several sentences ; and others being so shaken and depressed by separate confinement pushed to excess, that their life and reason

* The effect of this little bit of science may be thus stated :—Men for two years had been punished as refractory for not making all day two thousand revolutions per hour of a 15 lb. crank, when all the while it was a 45 lb. *crank* they had been vainly struggling against all day. The proportions of this gory lie never varied. Each crank tasked the Sisyphus three times what it professed to do. It was calculated that four prisoners, on an average crank marked 10 lb., had to exert an aggregate of force equal to one horse ; and this exertion was prolonged, day after day, far beyond a horse's power of endurance, and in many cases on a modicum of food so scanty, that no horse ever foaled, so fed, could have drawn an arm-chair a mile.

now stood in peril for want of open air, abundant light, and free intercourse with their species. At the head of these was poor Strutt, an old man crushed to clay by separate confinement recklessly applied. So alarming was this man’s torpor to Mr. Eden, that after trying in vain to interest him in the garden, that observer ventured on a very strong measure. He had learned from Strutt that he could play the fiddle; what does he do but runs and fetches his own violin into the garden, tunes it, and plays some most inspiriting rollicking old English tunes to him! A spark came into the fishy eye of Strutt. At the third tune the old fellow’s fingers began to work impatiently. Mr. Eden broke off directly, put fiddle and bow into Strutt’s hand, and ran off to the prison again to arrest melancholy, despair, lunacy, stagnation, mortification, putrefaction, by every art that philosophy and mother-wit could suggest to Christianity.

This determined man had collected his teaching mechanics again, and he had them all into the prison the moment Hawes was out. He could not get the cranks condemned as monsters—the day was not yet come for that; so he got them condemned as liars, and in their place tasks of rational and productive labour were set to most of the prisoners, and London written to for six more trades and arts.

A copy of the prison-rules was cut into eight portions and eight female prisoners set to compose each her portion. Copies to be printed on the morrow and put up in every cell according to the wise provision of

Rule 10, defied by the late gaoler for an obvious reason. Thus in an hour after the body of Hawes had passed through that gate a firm and adroit hand was wiping his gloomy soul out of the cells as we wipe a blotch of ink off a written page.

Care too was taken every prisoner should know the late gaoler was gone for ever. This was done to give the wretches a happy night. Ejaculations of thanksgiving burst from the cells every now and then ; by some mysterious means the immured seemed to share the joyful tidings with their fellows, and one pulse of hope and triumph to beat and thrill through all the life that wasted and withered there encased in stone ; and until sunset the faint notes of a fiddle struggled from the garden into the temple of silence and gloom, and astounded every ear.

The merry tunes as Strutt played them sounded like dirges, but they enlivened him as they sighed forth. They stirred his senses, and through his senses his mind, and through his mind his body, and so the anthropologist made a fiddle help save a life, which fact no mortal man will believe whose habit it is to chatter blindfold about man and investigate the 'crustaceonidunculæ.'

The cranks being condemned, rational industry returned, and the law reseated on the throne a man-slaughtering dunce had usurped, the champion of human nature went home to drink his tea and write the plot of his sermon.

He had won a great battle and felt his victory. He showed it too in his own way. On the evening of this

great day his voice was remarkably gentle and winning, and a celestial light seemed to dwell in his eyes: no word of exultation, nor even of self-congratulation; and he made no direct mention of the prison all the evening. His talk was about Susan’s affairs, and he paid his warm thanks to her and her aunt for all they had done for him. ‘You have been true friends, true allies,’ said he; ‘what do I not owe you! you have supported me in a bitter struggle, and now that the day is won I can find no words to thank you as I ought.’

Both these honest women coloured and glistened with pleasure, but they were too modest to be ready with praise or to bandy compliments.

‘As for you Susan, it was a master stroke your venturing into my den.’

‘Oh! we turn bold when a body is ill, don’t we aunt?’

‘I am not shy for one at the best of times’ remarked the latter.

‘Under Heaven you saved my life, at least I think so, Susan, for the medicinal power of soothing influences is immense, I am sure it is apt to be underrated; and then it was you who flew to Malvern and dragged Gulson to me at the crisis of my fate; dear little true-hearted friend I am sorry to think I can never repay you.’

‘You forget Mr. Eden’ said Susan almost in a whisper ‘I was paid beforehand.’

I wish I could convey the native grace and gentle dignity of gratitude with which the farmer’s daughter

murmured these four words, like a duchess acknowledging a kindness.

'Eh?' inquired Mr. Eden, 'oh! ah! I forgot' said he naively. 'No! that is nonsense Susan: you have still an immense Cr. against my name; but I know a way—Mrs. Davies, for as simple as I sit here you see in me the ecclesiastic that shall unite this young lady to an honest man, who report says loves her very dearly; so I mean to square our little account.'

'That is fair, Susan; what do you say?'

'La, aunt! why I shouldn't look upon it as a marriage at all if any clergyman but Mr. Eden said the words.'

'That is right' laughed Mr. Eden 'always set some little man above some great thing, and then you will always be—a woman. I must write the plot of my sermon, ladies, but you can talk to me all the same.'

He wrote and purred every now and then to the women, who purred to each other and now and then to him. Neither Hawes nor any other irritation rankled in his heart, or even stuck fast in his memory. He had two sermons to prepare for Sunday next, and he threw his mind into them as he had into the battle he had just won. "Hoc agebat."

CHAPTER VII.

HIS reverence in the late battle showed himself a strategist, and won without bringing up his reserves; if he had failed with Mr. Lacy he had another arrow behind in his quiver. He had been twice to the mayor and claimed a coroner's jury to sit on a suicide; the mayor had consented and the preliminary steps had been taken.

The morning after the gaoler's dismissal the inquest was held. Mr. Eden Evans Fry and others were examined, and the case came out as clear as the day and black as the night.

When twelve honest Englishmen, men of plain sense, not men of system, men taken from the public not from public offices, sat in a circle with the corpse of a countryman at their knees, *fiat lux*; 'twas as though twelve suns had burst into a dust-hole.

‘Manslaughter!’ cried they, and they sent their spokesman to the mayor and said yet more light must be let into this dust-hole, and the mayor said ‘Ay and it shall too. I will write to London and demand more light.’ And the men of the public went to their

own homes and told their wives and children and neighbours what cruelties and villanies they had unearthed, and their hearers being men and women of that people which is a God in intellect and in heart compared with the criticasters that try to misguide it with their shallow guesses and cant, and with the clerks that execute it in other men's names, cried out 'See now! What is the use our building courts of law or prisons unless they are to be open to us. Shut us out keep walls and closed gate between us and our servants and what comes of our courts of law and our prisons? Why they turn nests of villany in less than no time.'

So roared honest John Bull, and eased his heart, but that done, alas! he went to his work and troubled himself no more about it.

'There! there! let us hope it won't happen again,' said this worthy good-natured easy-going son of a calf. So the general result of the inquest was cheering to our enthusiast. He saw that a searching inquiry was inevitable. The future was very bright to him, for a wide and noble field of good was open to him now, and the clog was off him, yet he was sad this afternoon; ay saddest of the sad. Why was he sad?

I will tell you! but alas, many of you have already guessed.

The twelve honest Englishmen had hardly left the gaol an hour, crying "manslaughter!" and crying "shame!" when all in a moment, "TOMB!" fell a single heavy stroke of the great prison bell. The

heart of the prison leaped, and then grew cold—a long chill pause, then “TOMB!” again. The jurymen had told most of his fellow-sufferers how Josephs was driven into his grave—and now—

“TOMB!” the remorseless iron tongue crashed out one by one the last sad stern monosyllables of this sorrowfullest of human tales.

They put him in his coffin (“TOMB!”) a boy of sixteen, who wou'd be alive now but that caitiffs whom God confound on earth made life an *impossibility* to him (“TOMB!”) and that Shallows and Woodcocks, whom God confound on earth, and unconscientious non-inspecting inspectors, flunkeys, humbugs, hirelings, whom God confound on earth (“TOMB!”) left these scoundrels month after month and year after year unwatched, though largely paid by the queen and the people to watch them (“TOMB!”). Look on your work hirelings, and listen to that bell, which would not be tolling now if you had been men of brains and scruples instead of sordid hirelings. The priest was on his knees, praying for help from heaven to go through the last sad office with composure, for he feared his own heart when he should come to say “ashes to ashes ” and “dust to dust” over this hapless boy, that ought to be in life still. And still the great bell tolled, and many of the prisoners were invited kindly in a whisper, to come into the chapel ; but Fry could not be spared, and Hodges fiercely refused. And now the bell stopped, and as it stopped the voice of the priest arose, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

A deep and sad gloom was upon all as the last sad offices were done for this poor young creature cut short by foul play in the midst of them. And for all he could do the priest's voice trembled often, and a heavy sigh mingled more than once with the holy words.

What is that? "THIS OUR BROTHER!" a thief our brother? ay! the priest made no mistake, those were the words; pause on them.

Two great characters contradicted each other to the face over dead Josephs. Unholy State said, 'Here is the carcass of a thief whom I and society honestly believe to be of no more importance than a dog,—so it has unfortunately got killed between us no matter how; take this carcass and bury it,' said unholy State. Holy Church took the poor abused remains with reverence, prayed over them as she prays over the just, and laid them in the earth, calling them "this our brother." Judge now which is all in the wrong, unholy State or holy Church, for both cannot be right.

Now while the grave is being filled in judge women of England and America between these two—unholy State and holy Church. The earth contains no better judges of this doubt than you. Judge, and I will bow to your verdict with reverence. I know cliques too well to feel for them in a case where the great capacious heart alone can enlighten the clever little narrow shallow brain.

Thus in the nineteenth century, in a kind-hearted nation, under the most humane sovereign the world

has ever witnessed on an earthly throne—holy Church in vain denouncing the miserable sinners that slay the thief their brother—Edward Josephs has been done to death in the queen’s name, in the name of England, and in the name of the law.

But each of those great insulted names has its sworn defenders, its honoured and paid defenders.

It is not for us to suppose that men so high in honour will lay aside themselves and turn curs.

Ere I close this long story, let us hope I shall be able to relate with what zeal and honour statesmen disowned and punished wholesale manslaughter done in the name of the State; and with what zeal and horror judges disowned and punished wholesale manslaughter done in their name; and so in all good men’s eyes, washed off the blood with which a hireling had bespattered the state ermine and the snow-white robe of law.

For the present, the account between Josephs and the law stands thus:—Josephs has committed the smallest theft imaginable. He has stolen food. For this the law, professing to punish him with certain months’ imprisonment, has inflicted capital punishment; has overtaken, crucified, starved—overtaken, starved, crucified—robbed him of light, of sleep, of hope, of life; has destroyed his body, and perhaps his soul. Sum total—1st page of account—

Josephs’ a larcenist and a corpse. The law a liar and a felon.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOSEPHS has dropped out of our story. Mr. Hawes has got himself kicked out of our story. The other prisoners, of whom casual mention has been made, were never in our story, any more than the boy Xury in "Robinson Crusoe." There remains to us in the prison Mr. Eden and Robinson, a saint and a thief.

My readers have seen how the saint has saved the thief's life. They shall guess awhile how on earth Susan Merton can be affected by that circumstance. They have seen how the saint saved the thief from despair and hatred of the human race; and loved him and inspired him with an affection in return; and generally I think that, feebly as my pen has drawn so great a character, they can calculate, by what Mr. Eden has already done, what he will do while I am with Susan and George; what love, what eloquence, what ingenuity he will move to save this wandering sheep, to turn this thief honest, and teach him how to be honest yet not starve.

I will ask my reader to bear in mind, that the good and wise priest has no longer his hands tied by a gaoler

in the interest of the foul fiend. But then, against all this, is to be set the slippery heart of a thief, a thief almost from his cradle. Here are great antagonist forces and they will be in daily almost hourly collision for months to come. In life nothing stands still; all this will work goodwards or badwards. I must leave it to work.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. EDEN's health improved so visibly, that Susan Merton announced her immediate return to her father. It was a fixed idea in this young lady's mind, that she and Mrs. Davies had no business in the house of a saint upon earth, as she called Mr. Eden, except as nurses.

The parting of attached friends has always a touch of sadness, needless to dwell on at this time. Enough that these two parted as brother and young sister, and as spiritual adviser and advised, with warm expressions of Christian amity, and an agreement on Susan's part to write for advice and sympathy whenever needed.

On her arrival at Grassmere Farm there was Mr. Meadows to greet her.

‘ Well that is attentive ! ’ cried Susan.

There was also a stranger to her, a Mr. Clinton.

As nothing remarkable occurred this evening we may as well explain this Mr. Clinton.

He was a speculator, and above all a setter on foot of rotten speculations and a keeper on foot a little while of lame ones. No man exceeded him in the art of rose-tinting bad paper or parchment. He was sanguine and

fluent. His mind had two eyes, an eagle’s and a bat’s; with the first he looked at the “pros,” and with the second at the “cons” of a spec.

He was an old acquaintance of Meadows, and had come thirty miles out of the way to show him how to make 100 per cent. without the shadow of a risk. Meadows declined to violate the laws of Nature, but said he ‘if you like to stay a day or two I will introduce you to one or two who have money to fling away.’ And he introduced him to Mr. Merton. Now that worthy had a fair stock of latent cupidity, and Mr. Clinton was the man to tempt it.

In a very few conversations he convinced the farmer that there were a hundred ways of making money, all of them quicker than the slow process of farming and the unpleasant process of denying one’s-self superfluities and growing saved pennies into pounds.

‘What do you think John’ said Merton one day to Meadows, ‘I have got a few hundreds loose. I’m half minded to try and turn them into thousands for my girl’s sake. Mr. Clinton makes it clear don’t you think?’

‘Well I don’t know,’ was the reply. ‘I have no experience in that sort of thing, but it certainly looks well the way he puts it.’

In short Meadows did not discourage his friend from co-operating with Mr. Clinton; for his own part spoke him fair, and expressed openly a favourable opinion of his talent and his various projects, though he always found some excuse or other for not risking a halfpenny with him.

CHAPTER X.

ONE day Mr. Meadows walked into the post-office Farnborough, and said to Jefferies the postmaster,

‘A word with you in private, Mr. Jefferies.’

‘Certainly Mr. Meadows, come to my back parlour sir; a fine day Mr. Meadows, but I think we shall have a shower or two.’

‘Shouldn’t wonder. Do you know this five-pound note?’

‘Can’t say I do.’

‘Why it has passed through your hands?’

‘Has it? well a good many of them pass through my hands in course of the year. I wish a few of ’em would stop on the road.’

‘This one did. It stuck to your fingers, as the phrase goes.’

‘I don’t know what you mean sir’ said Jefferies haughtily.

‘You stole it’ explained Meadows quietly.

‘Take care’ cried Jefferies in a loud quaver—‘Take care, what you say! I’ll have my action of defamation

against you double quick if you dare to say such a thing of me.’

‘So be it. You will want witnesses. Defamation is no defamation you know ’till the scandal is published. Call in your lodger.’

‘Ugh!’

‘And call your wife!’ cried Meadows, raising his voice in turn.

‘Heaven forbid! Don’t speak so loud for goodness’ sake!’

‘Hold your tongue then and don’t waste my time with your gammon’ said Meadows sternly. Then resuming his former manner he went on in the tone of calm explanation. ‘One or two in this neighbourhood lost money coming through the post. I said to myself “Jefferies is a man that often talks of his conscience, he will be the thief,” so I baited six traps for you and you took five. This note came over from Ireland; you remember it now?’

‘I am ruined! I am ruined!’

‘You changed it at Evans’s the grocer’s; you had four sovereigns and silver for it. The other baits were a note and two sovereigns and two half sovereigns. You spared one sovereign, the rest you nailed. They were all marked by Lawyer Crawley. They have been traced from your hand, and lie locked up ready for next assizes. Good morning Mr. Jefferies.’

Jefferies turned a cold jelly where he sat and Meadows walked out, primed Crawley, and sent him to stroll in sight of the post-office.

Soon a quavering voice called Crawley into the post-office.

'Come into my back parlour sir. Oh! Mr. Crawley, can nothing be done? No one knows my misfortune but you and Mr. Meadows. It is not for my own sake sir, but my wife's. If she knew I had been tempted so far astray, she would never hold up her head again. Sir, if you and Mr. Meadows will let me off this once I will take an oath on my bended knees never to offend again.'

'What good will that do me?' asked Crawley contemptuously.

'Ah!' cried Jefferies a light breaking in, 'will money make it right? I'll sell the coat off my back.'

'Humph! If it was only me, but Mr. Meadows has such a sense of public duty, and yet—hum!—I know a way to influence him just now.'

'Oh, sir! do pray use your influence with him.'

'What will you do for me if I succeed?'

'Do for you, cut myself in pieces to serve you.'

'Well, Jefferies, I'm undertaking a difficult task to turn such a man as Meadows, but I will try it and I think I shall succeed; but I must have terms. Every letter that comes here from Australia you must bring to me with your own hands directly.'

'I will sir I will.'

'I shall keep it an hour or two perhaps, not more; and I shall take no money out of it.'

'I will do it sir, and with pleasure. It is the least I can do for you.'

And you must find me 10*l*.’ The little rogue must do a bit on his own account.

‘I must pinch to get it’ said Jefferies ruefully.

‘Pinch then’ replied Crawley coolly; ‘and let me have it directly.’

‘You shall you shall, before the day is out.’

‘And you must never let Meadows know I took this money of you.’

‘No, sir, I won’t! is that all?’

‘That is all.’

‘Then I am very grateful, sir, and I won’t fail you may depend.’

Thus the two battledores played with this poor little undetected one, whom his respectability no less than his roguery placed at their mercy.

CHAPTER XI.

WHENEVER Mr. Meadows could do Mr. Levi an ill turn he did ; and vice versâ. They hated one another like men who differ about baptism. Susan sprinkled dew-drops of charity on each in turn.

Levi listened to her with infinite pleasure. ‘ Your voice,’ said he, ‘ is low and melodious like the voice of my own people in the East.’ And then she secretly quoted the New Testament to him, having first ascertained that he had never read it ; and he wondered where on earth this simple girl had picked up so deep a wisdom and so lofty and self-denying a morality.

Meadows listened to her with respect from another cause ; but the ill offices that kept passing between the two men counteracted her transitory influence, and fed fat the ancient grudge.

CHAPTER XII.

‘ WILL FIELDING is in the town ; I’m to arrest him as agreed last night ? ’

‘ Hum ! no ! ’

‘ Why I have got the judgment in my pocket and the constable at the public hard by. ’

‘ Never mind ! he was saucy to me in the market yesterday—I was angry and—but anger is a snare : what shall I gain by locking him up just now ? let him go. ’

‘ Well sir, your will is law ’ said Crawley obsequiously but sadly.

‘ Now to business of more importance. ’

‘ At your service, sir. ’

But the business of more importance was interrupted by a sudden knock at the outside door of Mr. Meadows’s study.

‘ Well ! ’

‘ A young lady to see you. ’

‘ A young lady ? ’ inquired Meadows with no very amiable air, ‘ I am engaged—do you know who it is ? ’

‘ It is Farmer Merton’s daughter David says. ’

'Miss Merton!' cried Meadows with a marvellous change of manner. 'Show her up directly. Crawley, run into the passage, quick man and wait for signals.'

He bundled Crawley out, shut the secret door, threw open both the others, and welcomed Susan warmly at the threshold.

'Well this is good of you Miss Merton to come and shine in upon me in my own house.'

'I have brought your book back!' replied Susan colouring a little; 'that was my errand, that is,' said she, 'that was partly my errand.' She hesitated a moment—'I am going to Mr. Levi.'

Meadows's countenance fell.

'And I wouldn't go to him without coming to you; because what I have to say to him I must say to you as well. Mr. Meadows do let me persuade you out of this bitter feeling against the poor old man. Oh! I know you will say he is worse than you are; so he is; a little; but then consider he has more excuse than you; he has never been taught how wicked it is not to forgive. You know it—but don't practise it.'

Meadows looked at the simple-minded enthusiast, and his cold eye deepened in colour as it dwelt on her, and his voice dropped into the low and modulated tone which no other human creature but this ever heard from him.

'Human nature is very revengeful. Few of us are like you. It is my misfortune that I have not oftener a lesson from you; perhaps you might charm away this unchristian spirit that makes me unworthy to be your—your friend.'

‘Oh no! no!’ cried Susan, ‘if I thought so should I be here?’

‘Your voice and your face do make me at peace with all the world Susan—I beg your pardon—Miss Merton.’

‘And why not Susan?’ said the young lady kindly.

‘Well! Susan is a very inviting name.’

‘La! Mr. Meadows,’ cried Susan arching her brows, ‘why it is a frightful name, it is so old fashioned; nobody is christened Susan now-a-days.’

‘It is a name for everything that is good and gentle and lovely—’

A moment more and passion would have melted all the icy barriers prudence and craft had reared round this deep heart. His voice was trembling, his cheek flushing; but he was saved by—an enemy.

‘Susan!’ cried a threatening voice at the door, and there stood William Fielding with a look to match.

Rage burnt in Meadows’s heart.

He said brusquely ‘Come in,’ and seizing a slip of paper he wrote five words on it, and taking out a book flung it into the passage to Crawley. He then turned towards W. Fielding, who by this time had walked up to Susan who was on the other side of the screen.

‘Was told you had gone in here,’ said William quietly, ‘so I came after you.’

‘Now that was very attentive of you,’ replied Susan ironically. ‘It is so nice to have a sensible young man like you following for ever at one’s heels—like a dog.’

A world of quiet scorn embellished this little remark.

William's reply was happier than usual. 'The sheep find the dog often in their way, but they are all the safer for him.'

'Well I'm sure,' cried Susan, her scorn giving way to anger.

Mr. Meadows put in: 'I must trouble you to treat Miss Merton with proper respect when you speak to her in my house.'

'Who respects her more than I?' retorted William, 'but you see Mr. Meadows sheep are no match for wolves when the dog is away—so the dog is here.'

'I see the dog is here and by his own invitation; all I say is that if the dog is to stay here he must behave like a man.'

William gasped at this hit; he didn't trust himself to answer Meadows; in fact a blow of his fist seemed to him the only sufficient answer—he turned to Susan. 'Susan, do you remember poor George's last words to me? with a tear in his eye and his hand in mine. Well, I keep my promise to him, I keep my eye upon such as I think capable of undermining my brother. This man is a schemer Susan, and you are too simple to fathom him.'

The look of surprise crafty Meadows put on here, and William Fielding's implied compliment to his own superior sagacity struck Susan as infinitely ludicrous, and she looked at Meadows and laughed like a peal of bells. Of course he looked at her and laughed with

her. At this all young Fielding’s self-restraint went to the winds, and he went on—

‘But sooner than that I’ll twist as good a man’s neck as ever schemed in Jack Meadows’ shoes!’

At this defiance Meadows wheeled round on William Fielding and confronted him with his stalwart person and eyes glowing with gloomy wrath. Susan screamed with terror at William’s insulting words and at the attitude of the two men, and she made a step to throw herself between them if necessary; but before words could end in blows a tap at the study door caused a diversion, and a cringing sort of voice said—

‘May I come in?’

‘Of course you may,’ shouted Meadows; ‘the place is public. Anybody walks into my room to-day friend or foe. Don’t ask my leave—come in man whoever you are—Mr. Crawley! well, I didn’t expect a call from you any more than from this one.’

‘Now don’t you be angry, sir. I had a good reason for intruding on you this once. Jackson!’

Jackson stepped forward and touched William Fielding on the shoulder.

‘You must come along with me,’ said he.

‘What for?’ inquired Fielding.

‘You are arrested on this judgment,’ explained Crawley letting the document peep a moment from his waistcoat pocket. William threw himself into an attitude of defence. His first impulse was to knock the officer down and run into another county, but the next moment he saw the folly and injustice of this, and

another sentiment overpowered the honest simple fellow—shame. He covered his face with both his hands and groaned aloud with the scene of his humiliation.

'Oh! my poor William!' cried Susan. 'Oh! Mr. Meadows, can nothing be done?'

'Why, Miss Merton,' said Meadows looking down, 'you can't expect me to do anything for him. If it was his brother now Lawyer Crawley shouldn't ever take him out of my house.'

Susan flushed all over.

'That I am sure you would Mr. Meadows,' cried she (for feeling obscured grammar). 'Now see, dear William, how your temper and unworthy suspicions alienate our friends; but father shan't let you lie in prison. Mr. Meadows will you lend me a sheet of paper?'

She sat down, pen in hand, in generous excitement. While she wrote Mr. Meadows addressed Crawley—

'And now a word with you, Mr. Crawley. You and I meet on business now and then, but we are not on visiting terms that I know of. How come you to walk into my house with a constable at your back.'

'Well sir I did it for the best' said Crawley apologetically. 'Our man came in here, and the street door was open, and I said, "He is a friend of Mr. Meadows, perhaps it would be more delicate to all parties to take him in-doors than in the open street."''

'Oh, yes!' cried William, 'it is bitter enough as it is, but that would have been worse—thank you for

arresting me here, and now take me away and let me hide from all the world.’

‘Fools!’ said a firm voice behind the screen.

‘Fools!’ At this word and a new voice Susan started up from the table and William turned his face from the wall. Meadows did more.

‘Another!’ cried he in utter amazement; ‘why, my house is an inn. Ah!’

Whilst speaking he had run round the screen and come plump upon Isaac Levi seated in a chair and looking up in his face with stern composure. His exclamation brought the others round after him and a group of excited faces encircled this old man seated sternly composed.

‘Fools!’ repeated he, ‘these tricks were stale before England was a nation. Which of you two has the judgment?’

‘I sir’ said Crawley at a look from Meadows.

‘The amount?’

‘A hundred and six thirteen four.’

‘Here is the money. Give me the document.’

‘Here, sir.’

Levi read it.

‘This action was taken on a bill of exchange. I must have that too.’

‘Here it is, sir. Would you like an acknowledgement, Mr. Levi,’ said Crawley obsequiously.

‘No! foolish man. Are not these sufficient vouchers? You are free, sir,’ said Crawley to William with an air of cheerful congratulation.

'Am I? Then I advise you to get out of my way, for my fingers do itch to fling you head foremost down the stairs.'

On this hint out wriggled Mr. Crawley with a semicircle of bows to the company. Constable touched his frontlock and went straight away as if he was going through the opposite wall of the house. Meadows pointed after them with his finger and said to Levi—

'You see the road—get out of my house.'

The old man never moved from his chair, to which he had returned after paying William's debts.

'It is not your house,' said he coolly.

The other stared.

'No matter,' replied Meadows sharply, 'it is mine till my mortgage is paid off.'

'I am here to pay it.'

'Ah!'

'Principal and interest calculated up to twelve o'clock this eleventh day of March. It wants five minutes to twelve. I offer you principal and interest of six hundred and twenty-two pounds fourteen shillings and fivepence three farthings before these witnesses and demand the title deeds.'

Meadows hung his head, but he was not a man to waste words in mere scolding. He took the blow with forced calmness as who should say, 'This is your turn—the next is mine.'

'Miss Merton,' said he almost in a whisper, 'I never had the honour to receive you here before and I never

shall again. How long do you give me to move my things?’

‘Can you not guess?’ inquired the other with a shade of curiosity.

‘Why, of course you will put me to all the inconvenience you can. Come now am I to move all my furniture and effects out of this great house in twenty-four hours?’

‘I give you more than that.’

‘How kind! What, you give me a week perhaps?’ asked Meadows incredulously.

‘More than that, you fool! Don’t you see that it is on next Lady-day you will be turned into the street. Aha! woman-worshipper, on Lady-day! A tooth for a tooth!’

And the old man ground his own teeth, which were white as ivory, and his fist clenched itself while his eye glittered, and he swelled out from the chair, and literally bristled with hate—

‘A tooth for a tooth!’

‘Oh, Mr. Levi,’ said Susan sorrowfully, ‘how soon you have forgotten my last lesson!’

Meadows for a moment felt a chill of fear at the punctiliousness of revenge in this oriental whom he had made his enemy. To this succeeded the old hate multiplied by ten; but he made a monstrous effort and drove it from his face down into the recesses of his heart.

‘Well,’ said he, ‘may you enjoy this house as I have done this last twelvemonth!’

'That does you credit, good Mr. Meadows,' cried simple Susan, missing his meaning. Meadows continued in the same tone, 'And I must make shift with the one you vacate on Lady-day.'

'Solomon teach me to out-wit this dog.'

'Come Mr. Levi, I have visited Mr. Meadows and now I am going to your house.'

'You shall be welcome, kindly welcome,' said the old man with large and flowing courtesy.

'And will you show me,' said Susan very tenderly, 'where Leah used to sit?'

'Ah!'

'And where Rachael and Sarah loved to play?'

'Ah me! Ah me! Ah me! Yes! I could not show another these holy places, but I will show you.'

'And will you forget awhile this unhappy quarrel and listen to my words?'

'Surely I shall listen to you: for even now your voice is to my ear like the wind sighing among the cedars of Lebanon, and the wave that plays at night upon the sands of Galilee.'

'Tis but the frail voice of a foolish woman, who loves and respects you, and yet,' said Susan, her colour mantling with enthusiasm, 'with it I can speak you words more beautiful than Lebanon's cedars or Galilee's shore. Ay old man words that made the stars brighter and the sons of the morning rejoice. I will not tell you whence I had them, but you shall say surely they never came from earth, selfish cruel revengeful earth, these words that drop on our hot passions like the dew, and

‘speak of trespasses forgiven and peace and goodwill among men.’

Oh! magic of a lovely voice speaking the truths of heaven! How still the room was as these goodly words rang in it from a pure heart. Three men there had all been raging with anger and hate; now a calming music fell like oil upon these human waves, and stilled them.

The men drooped their heads, and held their breath to make sure the balmy sounds had ceased: then Levi answered in a tone gentle, firm, and low (very different from his last,) ‘Susanna bitterness fades from my heart as you speak: but experience remains:’ he turned to Meadows, ‘When I wander forth at Lady-day she shall still be watched over though I be far away. My eye shall be here, and my hand shall still be so over you all,’ and raising his thin hand, he held it high up, the nails pointing downwards: it looked just like a hawk hovering over its prey. ‘I will say no bitterer word than that to-day;’ and in fact he delivered this without apparent heat or malice.

‘Come then with me Susanna—a goodly name, it comes to you from the despised people; come like peace to my dwelling Susanna, you know not this world’s wiles as I do, but you can teach me the higher wisdom that controls the folly of passion and purifies the soul.’

The pair were gone, and William and Meadows were left alone. The latter looked sadly and gloomily at the door by which Susan had gone out. He was in a sort of torpor. He was not conscious of William’s presence.

Now the said William had a misgiving; in the country a man's roof is sacred; he had affronted Meadows under his own roof, and then Mr. Levi had come and affronted him there too.'

William began to doubt whether this was not a little hard, moreover he thought he had seen Meadows brush his eye hastily with the back of his hand as Susan retired.

He came towards Meadows with his old sulky, honest, hang-the-head manner, and said, 'Mr. Meadows, seems to me we have been a little hard upon you in your own house, and I am not quite easy about my share on't.'

Meadows shrugged his shoulders imperceptibly.

'Well sir, I am not the Almighty to read folk's hearts, least of all such a one as yours, but if I have done you wrong I ask your pardon. Come sir, if you don't mean to undermine my brother with the girl you can give me your hand, and I can give you mine—and there 'tis.'

Meadows wished this young man away, and seeing that the best way to get rid of him was to give him his hand, he turned round, and scarcely looking towards him, gave him his hand. William shook it and went away with something that sounded like a sigh. Meadows saw him out, and locked the door impatiently; then he flung himself into a chair, and laid his beating temples on the cold table; then he started up and walked wildly to and fro the room. The man was torn this way and that with rage love and remorse.

‘What shall I do?’ thus ran his thoughts. ‘That angel is my only refuge, and yet to win her I shall have to walk through dirt and shame, and every sin that is. I see crimes ahead; such a heap of crimes my flesh creeps at the number of them. Why not be like her, why not be the greatest saint that ever lived, instead of one more villain added to so many? Let me tear this terrible love out of my heart, and die. Oh! if some one would but take me by the scurf of the neck and drag me to some other country a million miles away, where I might never see my tempter again till this madness is out of me. Susan, you are an angel but you will plunge me to hell.’

Now it happened while he was thus raving and suffering the preliminary pangs of wrong-doing that his old servant knocked at the outside of the door, and thrust a letter through the trap; the letter was from a country gentleman one Mr. Chester for whom he had done business. Mr. Chester wrote from Lancashire. He informed Meadows he had succeeded to a very large property in that county, it had been shockingly mismanaged by his predecessor; he wanted a capable man’s advice, and moreover all the estates thereabouts were compelled to be surveyed and valued this year, which he deplored, but since so it was he would be surveyed and valued by none but John Meadows.

‘Come by return of post,’ added this hasty squire, ‘and I’ll introduce you to half the landed proprietors in this county.’

Meadows read this and seizing a pen wrote thus :

'DEAR SIR,

'Yours received this day at 1 P.M., and will start for your house at 6 P.M.'

He threw himself on his horse, and rode to his mother's house.

'Mother, I am turned out of my house.'

'Why John, you don't say so!'

'I must go into the new house I have built outside the town.'

'What the one you thought to let to Mr. James.'

'The same. I have got only a fortnight to move all my things. Will you do me a kindness now, will you see them put safe into the new house?'

'Me John! why I should be afraid something would go wrong.'

'Well, it isn't fair of me to put this trouble on you at your age; but read this letter, there is fifteen hundred pounds at least waiting for me in the North.'

The old woman put on her spectacles, and read the letter slowly.

'Go John! go by all means! I will see all your things moved into the new house, don't let them be a hindrance, you go. Your old mother will take care your things are not hurt moving, nor you wronged in the way of expense.'

'Thank you, mother! thank you! they say there is no friend like a mother, and I dare say they are not far wrong.'

‘No such friend but God, none such but God,’ said the old woman with great emphasis and looking Meadows in the face with a searching eye.

‘Well then here are the keys of the new house, and here are my keys. I am off to-night, so good-bye mother. God bless you!’

He had just turned to go, when by an unusual impulse he turned, took the old woman in his hands, almost lifted her off the ground, for she weighed light, and gave her a hasty kiss on the cheek; then he set her down and strode out of the house about his business.

When curious Hannah ran in the next moment she found the old lady in silent agitation.

‘Oh, dear! What is the matter Dame Meadows?’

‘Nothing at all silly girl.’

‘Nothing! And look at you all of a tremble.’

‘He took me up all in a moment and kissed me. I dare say it is five-and-twenty year since he kissed me last. He was a curly-headed lad then.’

So this had set the poor old thing trembling.

She soon recovered her firmness, and that very evening Hannah and she slept in John’s house, and the next day set to and began to move his furniture and prepare his new house for him.

CHAPTER XIII.

PETER CRAWLEY received a regular allowance during his chief's absence, and remained in constant communication with him, and was as heretofore his money-bag, his tool, his invisible hand. But if anybody had had a microscope and lots of time they might have discovered a gloomy hue spreading itself over Crawley's soul. A pleasant illusion had been rudely shaken.

All men have something they admire.

Crawley admired cunning. It is not a sublime quality, but Crawley thought it was and revered it with pious affectionate awe. He had always thought Mr. Meadows No. 1 in cunning, but now came a doleful suspicion that he was No. 2.

Losing a portion of his veneration for the chief he had seen out-manceuvred he took the liberty of getting drunk contrary to his severe command, and being drunk and maudlin he unbosomed himself on this head to a low woman who was his confidante whenever drink loosened his tongue.

‘ I’m out spirits Sal. I’m tebbly out spirits. Where shall we all go to? I dinn’t think there was great a man on earth z Mizza Meadows. But the worlz wide. Mizza Levi z greada man—a mudge greada man (hic). He was down upon us like a amma (hic). His Jew’s eye went through our lill sgeme like a gimlet. “Fools!” says he, that’s me and Meadows, “these dodges were used up in our famly before Lunnun was built. Fools!” Mizza Levi despises me and Meadows; and I respect him accordingly. I’m tebbly out of spirits (hic).’

CHAPTER XIV.

FARMER MERTON received a line from Meadows telling him he had gone into Lancashire on important business, and did not expect to be back for three months, except perhaps for a day at a time. Merton handed the letter to Susan.

‘ We shall miss him,’ was her remark.

‘ That we shall. He is capital company.’

‘ And a worthy man into the bargain,’ said Susan warmly, ‘ spite of what little-minded folk say and think. What do you think that Will Fielding did only yesterday?’

‘ I don’t know.’

‘ Well he followed me into—there it is not worth while having an open quarrel, but I shall hate the sight of his very face. I can’t think how such a fool can be George’s brother. No wonder George and he could not agree. Poor Mr. Meadows to be affronted in his own house just for treating me with respect and civility. So that is a crime now.’

‘ What are you saying girl? That young pauper affront my friend Meadows the warmest man for fifty

miles round. If he has he shall never come on my premises again. You may take your oath of that.’

Susan looked aghast. This was more than she had bargained for. She was the last in the world to set two people by the ears.

‘Now don’t you be so peppery father’ said she. ‘There is nothing to make a quarrel about.’

‘Yes there is though if that ignorant beggar insulted my friend.’

‘No! no! no!’

‘Why what did you say?’

‘I say—that here is Mr. Clinton coming to the door.’

‘Let him in girl; let him in. And you needn’t stay. We are going to talk business.’

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. MEADOWS preparing her son's new home and defeating the little cheating tradesmen and workmen that fasten like leeches on such as carry their furniture to a new house ; Hannah working round and round her in a state of glorious excitement ; Crawley smelling of Betts' British brandy, and slightly regretting he was not No. 1's tool (Levi's) instead of No. 2's, as he now bitterly called him, and writing obsequious letters to, and doing the dirty work of, the said No. 2 ; old Merton speculating, sometimes losing, sometimes winning ; Meadows gone to Lancashire with a fixed idea that Susan would be his ruin if he could not cure himself of his love for her ; Susan rather regretting his absence, and wishing for his return, that she might show him how little she sympathised with Will Fielding's suspicions injustice and brutality.

Leaving all this to work our story follows an honest fellow to the other side of the globe.

CHAPTER XVI.

GEORGE FIELDING found Farmer Dodd waiting to drive him to the town where he was to meet Mr. Winchester.

The farmer's wife would press a glass of wine upon George. She was an old playmate of his, and the tear was in her eye as she shook his hand and bade Heaven bless him, and send him safe back to "The Grove."

'A taking of his hand and him going across sea. Can't ye do no better nor that' cried the stout farmer; 'I'm not a looking dame' added he.

So then Mrs. Dodd put her hands on George's shoulders, and kissed him rustic-wise on both cheeks, and he felt a tear on his cheek, and stammered 'Good-bye Jane, you and I were always good neighbours, but now we shan't be neighbours for a while. Ned, drive me away please, and let me shut my eyes and forget that ever I was born.'

The farmer made a signal of intelligence to his wife, and drove him hastily away.

They went along in silence for about two miles. Then the farmer suddenly stopped. George looked up,

the other looked down. 'Allen's Corner, George. You know "The Grove" is in sight from here, and after this we shan't see it again on account of this here wood you know.'

'Thank ye, Ned! Yes one more look—the afternoon sun lies upon it. Oh, how different it do seem to my eyes now, by what it used when I rode by from market; but then I was going to it, now I'm going far far from it—never heed me Ned I shall be better in a moment. Heaven forgive me for thinking so little of the village folk as I have done. Then he suddenly threw up his hands. 'God bless the place and bless the folk' he cried very loud 'God bless them all from the oldest man in it, and that is grandfather, down to Isaac King's little girl that was born yester-night! and may none of them ever come to this corner, and their faces turned towards the sea.'

'Doant ye, George! doant ye! doant ye! doant ye!' cried Edward Dodd in great agitation.

'Let the mare go on Ned; she is fretting through her skin.'

'I'll fret her' roared the farmer lifting his whip exactly as if it was a sword, and a cut to be made at a dragoon's helmet. 'I'll cut her liver out.'

'No ye shan't,' said George. 'Poor thing, she is thinking of her corn at the Queen's head in Newborough. She isn't going across the sea—let her go, I've taken my last look and said my last word;' and he covered up his face.

Farmer Dodd drove on in silence, except that every

now and then he gave an audible snivel, and whenever this occurred he always accommodated the mare with a smart cut—reasonable !

At Newborough they found Mr. Winchester.

He drove George to the rail, and that night they slept on board the “Phoenix” emigrant ship. Here they found three hundred men and women in a ship where there was room for two hundred and fifty, accommodation for eighty.

Next morning, ‘Farmer,’ said Mr. Winchester gaily, ‘we have four hours before we sail, some of these poor people will suffer great hardships between this and Sidney. Suppose you and I go and buy a lot of blankets, brawn, needles, canvas, greatcoats, felt, American beef, solidified milk, Macintoshes, high-lows, and thimbles. That will rouse us up a little.’

‘Thank you sir kindly.’

Out they went into the Ratcliffe Highway, and chafered with some of the greatest rascals in trade. The difference between what they asked and what they took made George stare. Their little cabin was crowded with goods, only just room left for the aristocrat the farmer and Carlo. And now the hour came. Poor George was roused from his lethargy by the noise and bustle ; and oh, the creaking of cables sickened his heart. Then the steamer came up and took them in tow, and these our countrymen and women were pulled away from their native land, too little and too full to hold us all. It was a sad sight, saddest to those whose own flesh and blood was on the shore and saw the

steamer pull them away ; bitterest to those who had no friend to watch them go.

How they cling to England ! they stretched out their hands to her, and when they could hold to her no other way, they waved their hats and their handkerchiefs to their countrymen, who waved to them from shore, and so they spun out a little longer the slender chain that visibly bound them to her. And at this moment even the iron-hearted and the reckless were soft and sad. Our hearts' roots lie in the soil we have grown on.

No wonder then George Fielding leaned over the ship-side benumbed with sorrow, and counted each foot of water as it glided by, and thought 'Now I am so much farther from Susan.'

For a wonder he was not sea-sick, but his appetite was gone from a nobler cause ; he could hardly be persuaded to eat at all for many days.

The steamer cast off at Gravesend, and the captain made sail and beat down the Channel. Off the Scilly Isles a north-easterly breeze, and the "Phoenix" crowded all her canvas ; when topsails royals sky-scrapers, and all were drawing the men rigged out booms alow and aloft, and by means of them set studding sails out several yards clear of the hull on either side ; so on she ploughed, her canvas spread out like an enormous fan, or a huge albatross all wings. A goodly, gallant show ; but under all this vast and swelling plumage an exile's heart.

Of all that smarted ached and throbbed beneath that swelling plumage few suffered more than poor

George. It was his first great sorrow ; and all so new and strange.

The ship touched at Madeira, and then flew southward with the favoring gale.

Many many leagues she sailed, and still George hung over the bulwarks and sadly watched the waves. This simple-minded honest fellow was not a girl. If they had offered to put the ship about and take him back he would not have consented, but yet to go on almost broke his heart.

He was steel and butter.

His friend, the honourable Frank Winchester, was or seemed all steel.

He was one of those sanguine spirits that don't admit into their minds the notion of ultimate failure. He was supported too by a natural and indomitable gaiety. Whatever most men grumble or whine at he took as practical jokes played by Fortune partly to try his good humour, but more to amuse him.

The poorer passengers suffered much discomfort, and the blankets, etc., stored in Winchester's cabin, often warmed these two honest hearts, as with pitying hands they wrapped them round some shivering fellow-creature.

Off the banks of Newfoundland a heavy gale came on : it lasted thirty-six hours, and the distress and sufferings of the over-crowded passengers were terrible. An un-paternal government had allowed a ship to undertake a voyage of twelve thousand miles, with a short crew, short provisions, and just twice as many passengers as could be protected from the weather.

Driven from the deck by the piercing wind and the deluges of water that came on board, and crowded into the narrowest compass, many of these unfortunates almost died of sickness and polluted air; and when in despair they rushed back upon deck horrors and suffering met them in another shape; in vain they huddled together for a little warmth and tried to shield themselves with blankets stretched to windward. The bitter blast cut like a razor through their thread-bare defences, and the water rushed in torrents along the deck and crept cold as ice up their bodies as they sat huddled or lay sick and despairing on the hard and tossing wood; and whenever a heavier sea than usual struck the ship a despairing scream burst from the women, and the good ship groaned and shivered and seemed to share their fears, and the blast yelled into their souls—

‘I am mighty as fate—as fate. And pitiless! pitiless! pitiless! pitiless!’

Oh! then how they longed for a mud cabin, or a hole picked with a pickaxe in some ancient city wall, or a cowhouse, or a cartshed in their native land.

But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. This storm raised George Fielding’s better part of man. *Integer vitæ scelerisque purus* was not very much afraid to die. Once when the “Phoenix” gave a weather roll that wetted the foresail to the yard-arm, he said, ‘My poor Susan!’ with a pitying accent, not a quavering one. But most of the time he was busy crawling on all-fours from one sufferer to another with

a drop of brandy in a phial. The wind emptied a glass of the very moisture let alone the liquid in a moment. So George would put his bottle to some poor creature's lips, and if it was a man he would tell him in his simple way who was stronger than the wind or the sea and that the ship could not go down without his will. To the women he whispered that he had just had a word with the captain, and he said it was only a gale not a tempest as the passengers fancied, and there was no danger, none whatever.

The gale blew itself out, and then for an hour or two the ship rolled frightfully; but at last the angry sea went down, the decks were mopped, the "Phoenix" shook her wet feathers and spread her wings again and glided on her way.

George felt a little better; the storm shook him and roused him and did him good. And it was a coincidence in the history of these two lovers, that just as Susan under Mr. Eden's advice was applying the healing ointment of charitable employment to her wound, George too was finding a little comfort and life from the little bit of good he and his friend did to the poor population in his wooden hamlet.

Luckily for them it did not last long. After a voyage of four months one evening the captain shortened sail though the breeze was fair and the night clear. Upon being asked the reason of this strange order, he said knowingly—

'If you get up with the sun perhaps you will see the reason.'

Curiosity being excited one or two did rise before the sun. Just as he emerged from the sea a young seaman called Paterson, who was in the foretop, hailed the deck.

'What is it?' roared the mate.

'Land on the weather-bow' sung out the seaman in reply.

Land!

In one moment the word ran like electric fire through all the veins of the "Phoenix;" the upper deck was crowded in a minute, but all were disappointed. No one saw land but Mr. Paterson, whose elevation and keen sight gave him an advantage. But a heavenly smell as of a region of cowslips came and perfumed the air and rejoiced all the hearts; at six o'clock a something like a narrow cloud broke the watery horizon on the weather bow. All sail was made and at noon the coast of Australia glittered like a diamond under their lee.

Then the three hundred prisoners fell into a wild excitement, some became irritable, others absurdly affectionate to people they did not really care a button for. The captain himself was not free from the intoxication; he walked the deck in jerks instead of his usual roll, and clapped on sail as if he would fly on shore.

At half-past one they glided out of the open sea into the Port Jackson River. They were now in a harbour fifteen miles long, land-locked on both sides, and not a shoal or a rock in it. This wonderful haven, in which

all the navies that float or ever will float might manœuvre all day and ride at anchor all night without jostling, was the sea avenue by which they approached a land of wonders.

It was the second of December. The sky was purple and the sun blazed in its centre. The land glittered like a thousand emeralds beneath his glowing smile, and the waves seemed to drink his glory and melt it into their tints, so rich were the flakes of burning gold that shone in the heart of their transparent lovely blue.

Oh! what a heavenly land! and after four months prison at sea.

Our humble hero's heart beat high with hope. Surely in so glorious a place as this he could make a thousand pounds and then dart back with it to Susan. Long before the ship came to an anchor George got a sheet of paper and by a natural impulse wrote to Susan a letter, telling her all the misery the “Phoenix” and her passengers had come through between London Bridge and Sydney Cove, and as soon as he had written it he tore it up and threw it into the water.

‘It would have vexed her to hear what I have gone through. Time enough to tell her that when I am home again sitting by the fire with her hand in mine.’

So then he tried again and wrote a cheerful letter, and concealed all his troubles except his sorrow at being obliged to go so far from her even for a time.

‘But it is only for a time, Susan dear. And Susan dear, I’ve got a good friend here, and one that can feel

for us, for he is here on the same errand as I am. I am to bide with him six months and help him the best I can, and so I shall learn how matters are managed here; and after that I am to set up on my own account; and Susan dear, I do think by all I can see there is money to be made here. Heaven knows my heart was never much set on gain, but it is now because it is the road to you. Please tell Will Carlo has been a great comfort to me and is a general favourite. He pointed a rat on board ship, but it was excusable, and him cooped up so long and had almost forgotten the smell of a bird I dare say; and if anybody comes to make-believe to threaten me he is ready to pull them down in a minute. So tell Will this, and that I do think his master is as much my friend at home as the dog is out here.

'Susan dear, I do beg of you as a great favour to keep up your heart, and not give way to grief or despondent feelings: I don't; leastways I won't. Poor Mr. Winchester is here on the same errand as I am. But I often think his heart is stouter than mine, which is much to his credit and little to mine. Susan dear, I have come to the country that is farther from Grassmere than any other in the globe, that seems hard; and my very face is turned the opposite way to yours as I walk, but nothing can ever turn my heart away from my Susan. I desire my respects to Mr. Merton and that you would tell him I will make the one thousand pounds, please God. But I hope you will pray for me Susan that I may have that success; you are so good that I do think the Almighty will hear

you sooner than me or any one. So no more at present, dear Susan, but remain

‘ With sincere respect your

‘ loving servant and

‘ faithful lover till death

GEORGE FIELDING.’

They landed, Mr. Winchester purchased the right of feeding cattle over a large tract a hundred miles distant from Sydney, and after a few days spent in that capital started with their waggons into the interior. There for about five months George was Mr. Winchester’s factotum, and though he had himself much to learn, the country and his habits being new to him, still he saved his friend from fundamental errors, and from five in the morning till eight at night put zeal honesty and the muscular strength of two ordinary men at his friend’s service.

At the expiration of this period Mr. Winchester said to him one evening, ‘George I can do my work alone now, and the time is come to show my sense of your services and friendship. I have bought a run for you about eight miles from here, and now you are to choose five hundred sheep and thirty beasts: the black pony you ride goes with them.’

‘Oh no, sir! it is enough to rob you of them at all without me going and taking the pick of them.’

‘Well! will you consent to pen the flocks, and then lift one hurdle and take them as they come out, so many from each lot?’

'That I consent to sir, and remain your debtor for life.'

'I can't see it; I set *my life* a great deal higher than sheepskin.'

Mr. Winchester did not stop there, he forced a hundred pounds upon George. 'If you start in any business with an empty pocket you are a gone coon.'

So these two friends parted with mutual esteem, and George set to work by prudence and vigour to make the thousand pounds.

One thousand pounds! This one is to have the woman he loves for a thousand pounds: that sounds cheap. Heaven upon earth for a thousand pounds. What is a thousand pounds? Nothing. There are slippery men that gain this in a week by time bargains, trading on a capital of round 0's; others who net as much in an evening, and as honourably, by cards. There are merchants who net twenty times this sum by a single operation.

'An operation?' inquires Belgravia.

This is an operation: you send forth a man not given to drink and consequently chatter to Amsterdam, another not given to drink and chatter to New Orleans, another n. g. t. d. and c. to Bordeaux Cadiz Canton Liverpool Japan and where not all with secret instructions. Then at an appointed day all the men n. g. t. d. and c. begin gradually, secretly, cannily, to buy up in all those places all the lac-dye or something of the kind that you and I thought there was about thirty pounds of in creation. This done mercator raises

the price of lac-dye or what not throughout Europe. If he is greedy and raises it a halfpenny a pound, perhaps commerce revolts and invokes nature against so vast an oppression, and nature comes and crushes our speculator. But if he is wise and puts on what mankind can bear, say three mites per pound, then he sells tons and tons at this fractional profit on each pound, and makes fourteen thousand pounds by lac-dye or the like of which you and I thought creation held thirty or at most thirty-two pounds.

These men are the warriors of commerce, but its smaller captains watching the fluctuations of this or that market can often turn a thousand pounds ere we could say J. R. Far more than a thousand pounds have been made in a year by selling pastry off a table in the Boulevards of Paris.

In matters practical a single idea is worth thousands.

This nation being always in a hurry paid four thousand pounds to a man to show them how to separate letter-stamps in a hurry. ‘Punch the divisions full of little holes’ said he, and he held out his hand for the four thousand pounds; and now test his invention, tear one head from another in a hurry, and you will see that money sometimes goes cheaper than invention.

A single idea is sometimes worth a thousand pounds in a book, though books are by far the least lucrative channels ideas run in; Mr. Bradshaw’s duodecimo to wit—profit seven thousand pounds per annum.

A thousand pounds! How many men have toiled

for money all their lives, have met with success, yet never reached a thousand pounds.

Eight thousand servants, fed and half clothed at their master's expense, have put by for forty years, and yet not even by aid of interest and compound interest, and perquisites and commissions squeezed out of little tradesmen, and other time-honoured embezzlements have reached the rubicon of four figures. Five thousand little shopkeepers active intelligent and greedy, have bought wholesale and sold retail, yet never mounted so high as this above rent housekeeping bad debts and casualties. Many a writer of genius has charmed his nation and adorned her language, yet never held a thousand pounds in his hand even for a day. Many a great painter has written the world-wide language of form and colour, and attained to European fame, but not to a thousand pounds sterling English.

Among all these aspirants and a million more George Fielding now made one, urged and possessed by as keen an incentive as ever spurred a man.

George's materials were five hundred sheep, twenty cows, ten bullocks, two large sheep-dogs and Carlo. It was a keen clear frosty day in July when he drove his herd to his own pasture. His heart beat high that morning. He left Abner his shepherd a white native of the colony to drive the slow cattle. He strode out in advance, and scarce felt the ground beneath his feet. The thermometer was at 28°, yet his coat was only tied round his neck by the sleeves as he swept along all

health fire manhood love and hope. He marched this day like dear Smollett's lines, whose thoughts, though he had never heard them, fired his heart.

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share;
Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye,
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.

He was on the ground long before Abner, and set to work building a roofless hut on the west side of some thick bushes, and hard by the only water near at hand, and here he fixed his head-quarters stretched a blanket across the hut for a roof and slept his own master.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT the end of six months George Fielding's stock had varied thus. Four hundred lambs, ten calves, fifteen cows, four hundred sheep. He had lost some sheep in lambing, and one cow in calving, but these casualties every feeder counts on; he had been lucky on the whole. He had sold about eighty sheep, and eaten a few but not many, and of his hundred pounds only five pounds were gone; against which and the decline in cows were to be placed the calves and lambs.

George considered himself eighty pounds richer in substance than six months ago. It so happened that on every side of George but one were nomades, shepherd-kings—fellows with a thousand head of horned cattle and sheep like white pebbles by the sea; but on his right hand was another small bucolical, a Scotchman, who had started with less means than himself, and was slowly working his way, making a halfpenny and saving a penny after the manner of his nation. These two were mighty dissimilar, but they were on a level as to means and near neighbours, and that drew them together. In particular they used to pay each other

friendly visits on Sunday evenings, and McLaughlan would read a good book to George, for he was strict in his observances; but after that the pair would argue points of husbandry.

But one Sunday that George admiring his stock inadvertently proposed to him an exchange of certain animals, he rebuked the young man with awful gravity.

'Is this a day for warldly dealings?' said he. 'Hoo di ye think to thrive gien y'offer your mairchandeeze o' the Sabba day!'

George coloured up to the eyes.

'Ye'll may be no hae read the pauraible o' the money changers i' the temple, no forgettin a wheen warldly-minded chields that sell't doos, when they had mair need to be on their knees or hearkening a religious discourse or a bit psaum or the like. Aweel, ye need na hing your heed yon gate neether. Ye had na the privilege of being born in Scoetland ye ken, or nae doot ye'd hae kenned better, for ye are a decent lad—deed are ye. Aweel, stap ben lad, and I'se let ye see a drap whisky. The like does na aften gang doon an Ennglishman's thrapple.'

'Whisky? Well but it seems to me if we didn't ought to deal we didn't ought to drink.'

'Hout! tout! it is no forbidden to taste, thaats nae sen that ever I heerd't—C-way.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

GEORGE heard of a farmer who was selling off his sheep about fifty miles off near the coast. George put money in his purse, rose at three, and walked the fifty miles with Carlo that day. The next he chaffered with the farmer, but they did not quite agree. George was vexed but he knew it would not do to show it, so he strolled away carelessly towards the water. In this place the sea comes several miles inland, not in one sheet but in a series of salt-water lakes very pretty.

George stood and admired the water and the native blacks paddling along in boats of bark no bigger than a cocked hat. These strips of bark are good for carriage and bad for carriage ; I mean they are very easily carried on a man's back ashore, but they won't carry a man on the water so well, and sitting in them is like balancing on a straw. These absurd vehicles have come down to these blockheads from their fathers, so they won't burn them and build according to reason. They commonly paddle in companies of three ; so then whenever one is purled the other two come on each side of him, each takes a hand and with amazing skill

and delicacy they reseated him in his cocked hat, which never sinks—only purls. Several of these triads passed in the middle of the lake, looking to George like inverted capital “T’s.” They went a tremendous pace with occasional stoppages when a purl occurred.

Presently a single savage appeared nearer the land, and George could see his lithe sinewy form and the grace and rapidity with which he urged his gossamer bark along. It was like a hawk—half-a-dozen rapid strokes of his wings and then a smooth glide for ever so far.

‘Our savages would sit on the blade of a knife I do think,’ was George’s observation.

Now as George looked and admired blackee it unfortunately happened that a mosquito flew into one of blackee’s nostrils, which were much larger and more inviting—to a gnat than ours. The aboriginal sneezed, and over went the ancestral boat.

The next moment he was seen swimming and pushing his boat before him. He was scarce a hundred yards from the shore when all of a sudden down he went. George was frightened and took off his coat, and was unlacing his boots when the black came up again. ‘Oh, he was only larking,’ thought George. ‘But he has left his boat—and why, there he goes down again!’ The savage made a dive and came up ten yards nearer the shore, but he kept his face parallel to it, and he was scarce a moment in sight before he dived again. Then a horrible suspicion flashed across George—‘There is something after him!’

This soon became a fearful certainty. Just before he dived next time, a dark object was plainly visible on the water close behind him. George was wild with fear for poor blackee. He shouted at the monster, he shouted and beckoned to the swimmer; and last, snatching up a stone, he darted up a little bed of rock elevated about a yard above the shore. The next dive the black came up within thirty yards of this very place, but the shark came at him the next moment. He dived again, but before the fish followed him George threw a stone with great force and precision at him. It struck the water close by him, as he turned to follow his prey; George jumped down and got several more stones, and had one foot advanced and his arm high in air. Up came the savage panting for breath. The fish made a dart, George threw a stone; it struck him with such fury on the shoulders, that it span off into the air and fell into the sea forty yards off. Down went the man, and the fish after him. The next time they came up, to George's dismay the sea-tiger showed no signs of being hurt, and the man was greatly distressed. The moment he was above water George heard him sob, and saw the whites of his eyes, as he rolled them despairingly; and he could not dive again for want of breath. Seeing this, the shark turned on his back, and came at him with his white belly visible and his treble row of teeth glistening in a mouth like a red grave.

Rage as well as fear seized George Fielding, the muscles started on his brawny arm as he held it aloft with a heavy stone in it. The black was so hard

pressed the last time, and so dead beat, that he could make but a short duck under the fish's back and come out at his tail. The shark did not follow him this time, but cunning as well as ferocious slipped a yard or two in shore, and waited to grab him ; not seeing him, he gave a slap with his tail-fin, and reared his huge head out of water a moment to look forth ; then George Fielding grinding his teeth with fury flung his heavy stone with tremendous force at the creature's cruel eye. The heavy stone missed the eye by an inch or two, but it struck the fish on the nose and teeth with a force that would have felled a bullock.

“ *Creeesh !* ” went the sea-tiger's flesh and teeth, and the blood squirted in a circle. Down went the shark like a lump of lead literally felled by the crashing stroke.

‘ I've hit him ! I've hit him ! ’ roared George seizing another stone. ‘ Come here, quick ! quick ! before he gets the better of it. ’

The black swam like a mad thing to George. George splashed into the water up to his knee, and taking blackee under the arm-pits tore him out of the water and set him down high and dry.

‘ Give us your hand over it old fellow, ’ cried George, panting and trembling. ‘ Oh dear, my heart is in my mouth it is ! ’

The black's eye seemed to kindle a little at George's fire, but all the rest of him was as cool as a cucumber. He let George shake his hand and said quietly—

‘ Thank you sar ! Jacky thank you a good deal ! ’ he

added in the same breath 'suppose you lend me a knife then we eat a good deal.'

George lent him his knife, and to his surprise the savage slipped into the water again. His object was soon revealed ; the shark had come up to the surface and was floating motionless. It was with no small trepidation George saw this cool hand swim gently behind him and suddenly disappear ; in a moment, however, the water was red all round, and the shark turned round on his belly. Jacky swam behind, and pushed him ashore. It proved to be a young fish about six feet long ; but it was as much as the men could do to lift it. The creature's nose was battered, and Jacky showed this to George, and let him know that a blow on that part was deadly to them.

' You make him dead for a little while ' said he, ' so then I make him dead enough to eat ;' and he showed where he had driven the knife into him in three places.

Jacky's next proceeding was to get some dry sticks and wood, and prepare a fire, which to George's astonishment he lighted thus. He got a block of wood, in the middle of which he made a little hole ; then he cut and pointed a long stick, and inserting the point into the block, worked it round between his palms for some time and with increasing rapidity. Presently there came a smell of burning wood, and soon after it burst into a flame at the point of contact. Jacky cut slices of shark and toasted them.

' Black fellow stupid fellow eat em raw, but I eat em burn't like white man.'

He then told George he had often been at Sydney, and could ‘speak the white man’s language a good deal,’ and must on no account be confounded with common black fellows. He illustrated his civilization by eating the shark as it cooked; that is to say, as soon as the surface was brown he gnawed it off, and put the rest down to brown again, and so ate a series of laminae instead of a steak; that it would be cooked to the centre if he let it alone was a fact this gentleman had never discovered; probably had never had the patience to discover.

George finding the shark’s flesh detestable, declined it, and watched the other. Presently, he vented his reflections.

‘Well you are a cool one! half an hour ago I didn’t expect to see you eating him, quite the contrary.’

Jacky grinned good-humouredly in reply.

When George returned to the farmer, the latter, who had begun to fear the loss of a customer, came at once to terms with him. The next day he started for home with three hundred sheep. Jacky announced that he should accompany him, and help him a good deal. George’s consent was not given, simply because it was not asked. However, having saved the man’s life, he was not sorry to see a little more of him.

It is usual in works of this kind to give minute descriptions of people’s dress. I fear I have often violated this rule. However I will not in this case.

Jacky’s dress consisted of, in front a sort of purse

made of rat-skin: behind a bran new tomahawk and two spears.

George fancied this costume might be improved upon; he therefore bought from the farmer a second-hand coat and trousers, and his new friend donned them with grinning satisfaction. The farmer's wife pitied George living by himself out there, and she gave him several little luxuries; a bacon-ham, some tea, and some orange-marmalade, and a little lump-sugar and some potatoes.

He gave the potatoes to Jacky to carry. They weighed but a few pounds. George himself carried about a quarter of a hundredweight. For all that the potatoes worried Jacky more than George's burden him. At last he loitered behind so long that George sat down and lighted his pipe. Presently up comes Niger with the sleeves of his coat hanging on each side of his neck and the potatoes in them. My lord had taken his tomahawk and chopped off the sleeves at the arm-pit; then he had sewed up their bottoms and made bags of them, uniting them at the other end by a string which rested on the back of his neck like a milkmaid's balance. Being asked what he had done with the rest of the coat he told George he had thrown it away because it was a good deal hot.

'But it won't be hot at night and then you will wish you hadn't been such a fool.'

No, he couldn't make Jacky see this; being hot at the time Jacky could not feel the cold to come. Jacky became a hanger-on of George, and if he did little he cost little; and if a beast strayed he was invaluable, he

could follow the creature for miles by a chain of physical evidence no single link of which a civilised man would have seen.

A quantity of rain having fallen and filled all the pools George thought he would close with an offer that had been made him and swap one hundred and fifty sheep for cows and bullocks. He mentioned this intention to McLaughlan one Sunday evening. McLaughlan warmly approved his intention. George then went on to name the customer who was disposed to make the exchange in question. At this the worthy McLaughlan showed some little uneasiness and told George he might do better than deal with that person.

George said he should be glad to do better, but did not see how.

‘Humph!’ said McLaughlan.

McLaughlan then invited George to a glass of grog, and while they were sipping he gave an order to his man.

McLaughlan inquired when the proposed negotiation was likely to take place.

‘To-morrow morning’ said George. ‘He asked me to go over about it this afternoon, but I remembered the lesson you gave me about making bargains on this day, and I said “To-morrow farmer.”’

‘Y’re a guid lad,’ said the Scot demurely; ‘y’re just as decent a body as ever I forgathered wi’, and I’m thinking it’s a sin to let ye gang twal miles for mairchandeeze whan ye can hae it a hantle cheaper at your ain door.’

‘Can I? I don’t know what you mean.’

'Ye dinna ken what I mean? Maybe no.'

Mr. McLaughlan fell into thought a while, and the grog being finished he proposed a stroll. He took George out into the yard, and there the first thing they saw was a score and a half of bullocks that had just been driven into a circle and were maintained there by two men and two dogs.

George's eye brightened at the sight and his host watched it.

'Aweel' said he 'has Tamson a bonnier lot than yon to gie ye?'

'I don't know' said George drily 'I have not seen his.'

'But I hae, and he hasna a lot to even wi' them.'

'I shall know to-morrow' said George. But he eyed McLaughlan's cattle with an expression there was no mistaking.

'Aweel' said the worthy Scot 'y're a neebor and a decent lad, ye are; sae I'll just speer ye ane question. Noo mon,' continued he in a most mellifluous tone and pausing at every word, 'gien it were Monday—as it is the Sabba day—hoo mony sheep wud ye gie for yon bonnie beasties?'

George finding his friend in this mind pretended to hang back and to consider himself bound to treat with Thomson first. The result of all which was that McLaughlan came over to him at daybreak and George made a very profitable exchange with him.

At the end of six months more George found himself twice as rich in substance as at first starting; but instead

of one hundred pound cash he had but eighty. Still if sold up he would have fetched five hundred pounds. But more than a year was gone since he began on his own account.

'Well,' said George, 'I must be patient and still keep doubling on, and if I do as well next year as last I shall be worth eight hundred pounds.'

A month's dry hot weather came and George had arduous work to take water to his bullocks and to drive them in from long distances to his homestead, where by digging enormous tanks he had secured a constant supply. No man ever worked for a master as this rustic Hercules worked for Susan Merton. Prudent George sold twenty bullocks and cows to the first bidder.

'I can buy again at a better time,' argued he.

He had now one hundred and twenty-five pounds in hand. The drought continued and he wished he had sold more.

One morning Abner came hastily in and told him that nearly all the beasts and cows were missing. George flung himself on his horse and galloped to the end of his run. No signs of them—returning disconsolate he took Jacky on his crupper and went over the ground with him. Jacky's eyes were playing and sparkling all the time in search of signs. Nothing clear was discovered. Then at Jacky's request they rode off George's feeding ground altogether and made for a little wood about two miles distant.

'Suppose you stop here, I go in the bush' said Jacky.

George sat down and waited. In about two hours Jacky came back.

'I've found 'em,' said Jacky coolly.

George rose in great excitement and followed Jacky through the stiff bush, often scratching his hands and face. At last Jacky stopped and pointed to the ground, 'There!'

'There? ye foolish creature,' cried George; 'that's ashes where somebody has lighted a fire; that and a bone or two is all I see.'

'Beef bone,' replied Jacky coolly.

George started with horror.

'Black fellow burn beef here and eat him. Black fellow a great thief. Black fellow take all your beef. Now we catch black fellow and shoot him suppose he not tell us where the other beef gone.'

'But how am I to catch him? How am I even to find him?'

'You wait till the sun so; then black fellow burn more beef. Then I see the smoke; then I catch him. You go fetch the make-thunder with two mouths. When he see him that make him honest a good deal.'

Off galloped George and returned with his double-barrelled gun in about an hour and a-half. He found Jacky where he had left him at the foot of a gum-tree tall and smooth as an admiral's main-mast.

Jacky who was coiled up in happy repose like a dog in warm weather rose and with a slight yawn said, 'Now I go up and look.'

He made two sharp cuts on the tree with his

tomahawk and putting his great toe in the nick rose on it, made another nick higher up, and holding the smooth stem put his other great toe in it, and so on till in an incredibly short time he had reached the top and left a staircase of his own making behind him. He had hardly reached the top when he slid down to the bottom again and announced that he had discovered what they were in search of.

George halted the pony to the tree and followed Jacky, who struck farther into the wood. After a most disagreeable scramble, at the other side of the wood Jacky stopped and put his finger to his lips. They both went cautiously out of the wood and mounting a bank that lay under its shelter they came plump upon a little party of blacks, four male and three female. The women were seated round a fire burning beef and gnawing the outside laminæ, then putting it down to the fire again. The men, who always serve themselves first, were lying gorged, but at sight of George and Jacky they were on their feet in a moment and their spears poised in their hands.

Jacky walked down the bank and poured a volley of abuse into them. Between two of his native sentences he uttered a quiet aside to George, 'Suppose black fellow lift spear you shoot him dead,' and then abused them like pickpockets again and pointed to the make-thunder with two mouths in George's hand.

After a severe cackle on both sides the voices began to calm down like water going off the boil, and presently soft low gutturals passed in pleasant modu-

lation. Then the eldest male savage made a courteous signal to Jacky that he should sit down and gnaw. Jacky on this administered three kicks among the gins* and sent them flying, then down he sat and had a gnaw at their beef—George's beef I mean. The rage of hunger appeased he rose, and with the male savages took the open country. On the way he let George know that these black fellows were of his tribe, that they had driven off the cattle and that he had insisted on restitution which was about to be made; and sure enough before they had gone a mile they saw some beasts grazing in a narrow valley. George gave a shout of joy, but counting them he found fifteen short. When Jacky inquired after the others the blacks shrugged their shoulders. They knew nothing more than this, that wanting a dinner they had driven off forty bullocks; but finding they could only eat one that day, they had killed one and left the others, of whom some were in the place they had left them; the rest were somewhere they didn't know where far less care. They had dined, that was enough for them.

When this characteristic answer reached George he clenched his teeth and for a moment felt an impulse to make a little thunder on their slippery black carcasses, but he groaned instead and said 'They were never taught any better.'

Then Jacky and he set to work to drive the cattle together. With infinite difficulty they got them all home by about eleven o'clock at night. The next day

* γυναι.

up with the sun to find the rest. Two o'clock and only one had they fallen in with, and the sun broiled so that lazy Jacky gave in and crept in under the beast for shade, and George was fain to sit on his shady side with moody brow and sorrowful heart.

Presently Jacky got up.

'I find one' said he.

'Where? where?' cried George looking all round.

Jacky pointed to a rising ground at least six miles off.

George groaned 'Are you making a fool of me? I can see nothing but a barren hill with a few great bushes here and there. You are never taking those bushes for beasts?'

Jacky smiled with utter scorn.

'White fellow stupid fellow; he see nothing.'

'Well and what does black fellow see?' snapped George.

'Black fellow see a crow coming from the sun, and when he came over there he turned and went down and not get up again a good while. Then black fellow say "I tink." Presently come flying one more crow from that other side where the sun is not. Black fellow watch him, and when he come over there he turn round and go down too, and not get up a good while. Then black fellow say "I know."'

'Oh, come along!' cried George.

They hurried on; but when they came to the rising ground and bushes Jacky put his finger to his lips.

'Suppose we catch the black fellows that have got wings; you make thunder for them?'

He read the answer in George's eye. Then he took George round the back of the hill and they mounted the crest from the reverse side. They came over it and there at their very feet lay one of George's best bullocks, with tongue protruded, breathing his last gasp. A crow of the country was perched on his ribs, digging his thick beak into a hole he had made in his ribs, and another was picking out one of his eyes. The birds rose heavily, clogged and swelling with gore. George's eyes flashed, his gun went up to his shoulder, and Jacky saw the brown barrel rise slowly for a moment as it followed the nearest bird wobbling off with broad back invitingly displayed to the marksman: bang! the whole charge shivered the ill-omened glutton, who instantly dropped riddled with shot like a sieve, while a cloud of dusky feathers rose from him into the air. The other, hearing the earthly thunder and Jacky's exulting whoop, gave a sudden whirl with his long wing and shot up into the air at an angle and made off with great velocity; but the second barrel followed him as he turned and followed him as he flew down the wind: bang! out flew two handfuls of dusky feathers, and glutton No. 2 died in the air and its carcase and expanded wings went whirling like a sheet of paper and fell on the top of a bush at the foot of the hill.

All this delighted the devil-may-care Jacky, but it may be supposed it was small consolation to George. He went up to the poor beast, who died even as he looked down on him.

‘Drought, Jacky! drought!’ said he, ‘it is Moses the best of the herd. Oh, Moses, why couldn’t you stay beside me. I’m sure I never let you want for water, and never would—you left me to find worse friends; and so the poor simple fellow moaned over the unfortunate creature, and gently reproached him for his want of confidence in him that it was pitiful. Then suddenly turning on Jacky he said gravely ‘Moses won’t be the only one I doubt.’

The words were hardly out of his mouth before a loud moo proclaimed the vicinity of cattle. They ran towards the sound, and in a rocky hollow they found nine bullocks, and alas! at some little distance another lay dead. Those that were alive were panting with lolling tongues in the broiling sun. How to save them; how to get them home a distance of eight miles. ‘Oh! for a drop of water.’ The poor fools had strayed into the most arid region for miles round.

Instinct makes blunders as well as reason.—Bestiale est errare.

‘We must drive them from this Jacky though half of them die by the way.’

The languid brutes made no active resistance. Being goaded and beaten they got on their legs and moved feebly away.

Three miles the men drove them, and then one who had been already staggering more than the rest gave in, and lay down, and no power could get him up again. Jacky advised to leave him. George made a few steps

onward with the other cattle, but then he stopped and came back to the sufferer and sat down beside him disconsolate.

'I can't bear to desert a poor dumb creature. He can't speak Jacky, but look at his poor frightened eye; it seems to say have you got the heart to go on and leave me to die for the want of a drop of water. Oh! Jacky, you that is so clever in reading the signs of Nature, have pity on the poor thing and do pray try and find us a drop of water. I'd run five miles and fetch it in my hat if you would but find it. Do help us Jacky:' and the white man looked helplessly up to the black savage, who had learned to read the small type of Nature's book and he had not.

Jacky hung his head.

'White fellow's eyes always shut; black fellow's always open. We pass here before and Jacky look for water—look for every thing. No water here. But,' said he languidly, 'Jacky will go up high tree and look a good deal.'

Selecting the highest tree near he chopped a staircase, and went up it almost as quickly as a bricklayer mounts a ladder with a hod. At the top he crossed his thighs over the stem, and there he sat full half an hour; his glistening eye reading the confused page, and his subtle mind picking out the minutest syllables of meaning. Several times he shook his head. At last all of a sudden he gave a little start, and then a chuckle, and the next moment he was on the ground.

'What is it?'

'Black fellow stupid fellow, look too far off,' and he laughed again for all the world like a jack-daw.

'What is it?'

'A little water not much.'

'Where is it? Where is it? Why don't you tell me where it is?'

'Come,' was the answer.

Not forty yards from where they stood Jacky stopped, and thrusting his hand into a tuft of long grass pulled out a short blue flower with a very thick stem.

'Saw him spark from the top of the tree' said Jacky with a grin. 'This fellow stand with him head in the air but him foot in the water. Suppose no water he die a good deal quick.'

Then taking George's hand he made him press the grass hard, and George felt moisture ooze through the herb.

'Yes my hand is wet, but Jacky this drop won't save a beast's life without it is a frog's.'

Jacky smiled and rose.

'Where that wet came from more stay behind.'

He pointed to other patches of grass close by, and following them showed George that they got larger and larger in a certain direction. At last he came to a hidden nook, where was a great patch of grass quite a different colour, green as an emerald.

'Water' cried Jacky 'a good deal of water.'

He took a jump and came down flat on his back on the grass, and sure enough though not a drop of surface

water was visible, the cool liquid squirted up in a shower round Jacky.

Nature is extremely fond of producing the same things in very different sizes. Here was a miniature copy of those large Australian lakes which show nothing to the eye but rank grass. You ride upon them a little way, merely wetting your horse's feet, but after awhile the sponge gets fuller and fuller, and the grass shows symptoms of giving way, and letting you down to "bottomless perdition."

They squeezed out of this grass sponge a calabash full of water, and George ran with it to the panting beast. Oh how he sucked it up, and his wild eye calmed, and the liquid life ran through all his frame!

It was hardly in his stomach before he got up of his own accord, and gave a most sonorous moo, intended no doubt to express the sentiment of 'never say die.'

George drove them all to the grassy sponge, and kept them there 'till sunset. He was three hours squeezing out water and giving it them before they were satisfied. Then in the cool of the evening he drove them safe home.

The next day one more of his strayed cattle found his way home. The rest he never saw again. This was his first dead loss of any importance: unfortunately it was not the last.

The brutes were demoralized by their excursion, and being active as deer they would jump over anything and stray. Sometimes the vagrant was recovered, often he was found dead; and sometimes he went twenty

miles and mingled with the huge herds of some Croesus, and was absorbed like a drop of water and lost to George Fielding.

This was a bitter blow. This was not the way to make the thousand pounds.

‘Better sell them all to the first comer, and then I shall see the end of my loss. I am not one of your lucky ones. I must not venture.’

A settler passed George’s way driving a large herd of sheep and ten cows. George gave him a dinner and looked over his stock.

‘You have but few beasts for so many sheep,’ said he. The other assented.

‘I could part with a few of mine to you if you were so minded.’

The other said he should be very glad, but he had no money to spare. Would George take sheep in exchange.

‘Well,’ drawled George, ‘I would rather it had been cash, but such as you and I must not make the road hard to one another. Sheep I’ll take, but full value.’

The other was delighted, and nearly all George’s bullocks became his for one hundred and fifty sheep.

George was proud of his bargain, and said, ‘That is a good thing for you and me Susan please God.’

Now the next morning Abner came in and said to George, ‘I don’t like some of your new lot—the last that are marked with a red V.’

‘Why what is wrong about them?’

‘Come and see.’

He found more than one of the new sheep rubbing themselves angrily against the pen, and sometimes among one another.

'Oh dear!' said George, 'I have prayed against this on my knees every night of my life, and it is come upon me at last. Sharpen your knife Abner.'

'What! must they all—'

'All the new lot. Call Jacky, he will help you; he likes to see blood. I can't abide it. One hundred and fifty sheep! eighteen-pennorth of wool, and eighteen-pennorth of fat when we fling 'em into the pot, that is all that is left to me of yesterday's deal.'

Jacky was called.

'Now Jacky,' said George, 'these sheep have got the scab of the country, if they get to my flock and taint it I am a beggar from that moment. These sheep are sure to die so Abner and you are to kill them. He will show you how. I can't look on and see their blood and my means spilled like water. Susan this is a black day for us.'

He went away and sat down upon a stone a good way off, and turned his back upon his house and his little homestead. This was not the way to make the thousand pounds.

The next day the dead sheep were skinned and their bodies chopped up and flung into the copper. The grease was skimmed as it rose and set aside, and when cool was put into rough barrels with some salt and kept until such time as a merchant should pass that way and buy it.

‘Well!’ said George with a sigh, ‘I know my loss. But if the red scab had got into the large herd, there would have been no end to the mischief.’

Soon after this a small feeder at some distance offered to change with M’Laughlan. That worthy liked his own ground best, but willing to do his friend George a good turn he turned the man over to him. George examined the new place, found that it was smaller but richer and better watered, and very wisely closed with the proposal.

When he told Jacky that worthy’s eyes sparkled.

‘Black fellow likes another place. Not every day the same.’

And in fact he let out that if this change had not occurred his intention had been to go a-hunting for a month or two, so weary had he become of always the same place.

The new ground was excellent, and George’s hopes lately clouded brightened again. He set to work and made huge tanks to catch the next rain, and as heretofore did the work of two.

It was a sad thing to have to write to Susan and tell her that after twenty months’ hard work he was just where he had been at first starting.

One day as George was eating his homely dinner on his knee by the side of his principal flock he suddenly heard a tremendous scrimmage mixed with loud abusive epithets from Abner. He started up, and there was Carlo pitching into a sheep who was trying to jam herself into the crowd to escape him. Up runs one of

the sheep-dogs growling, but instead of seizing Carlo as George thought he would, what does he do but fall upon another sheep, and spite of all their evasions the two dogs drove the two sheep out of the flock and sent them pelting down the hill. In one moment George was alongside Abner.

'Abner' said he 'how came you to let strange sheep in among mine?'

'Never saw them till the dog pinned them.'

'You never saw them,' said George reproachfully. 'No nor your dog either till my Carlo opened your eyes. A pretty thing for a shepherd and his dog to be taught by a pointer. Well,' said George, 'you had eyes enough to see whose sheep they were. Tell me that if you please?'

Abner looked down.

'Why Abner?'

'I'd as lieve bite off my tongue as tell you.'

George looked uneasy and his face fell.

'A "V."'

'Don't ye take on,' said Abner. 'They couldn't have been ten minutes among ours, and there were but two. And don't ye blow me up, for such a thing might happen to the carefulest shepherd that ever was.'

'I won't blow ye up Will Abner,' said George. 'It is my luck not yours that has done this. It was always so. From a game of cricket upwards I never had my neighbour's luck. If the flock are not tainted I'll give you five pounds, and my purse is not so deep as some ;

if they are take your knife and drive it into my heart : I’ll forgive you that as I do this. Carlo ! let me look at you. See here, he is all over some stinking ointment ; it is off those sheep. I knew it. ’Twasn’t likely a pointer dog would be down on strange sheep like a shepherd’s dog by the sight. ’Twas this stuff offended him. Heaven’s will be done.’

‘ Let us hope the best, and not meet trouble half way.’

‘ Yes!’ said George feebly. ‘ Let us hope the best.’

‘ Don’t I hear that Thompson has an ointment that cures the red scab?’

‘ So they say.’

George whistled to his pony. The pony came to him. George did not treat him as we are apt to treat a horse—like a riding machine. He used to speak to him and caress him when he fed him and when he made his bed, and the horse followed him about like a dog.

In half an hour’s sharp riding they were at Thompson’s, an invaluable man that sold and bought animals, doctored animals, and kept a huge boiler in which bullocks were reduced to a few pounds of grease in a very few hours.

‘ You have an ointment that is good for the scab, sir?’

‘ That I have, farmer. Sold some to a neighbour of yours day before yesterday.’

‘ Who was that?’

‘ A new comer. Vesey is his name.’

George groaned.

‘ How do you use it, if you please?’

'Shear 'em close, rub the ointment well in, wash 'em every two days, and rub in again.'

'Give me a stone of it.'

'A stone of my ointment! Well! you are the wisest man I have come across this year or two. You shall have it sir.'

George rode home with his purchase.

Abner turned up his nose at it, and was inclined to laugh at George's fears. But George said to himself— 'I have Susan to think of as well as myself. Besides,' said he a little bitterly, 'I haven't a grain of luck. If I am to do any good I must be twice as prudent and thrice as industrious as my neighbours or I shall fall behind them. Now Abner we'll shear them close.'

'Shear them! Why it is not two months since they were all sheared.'

'And then we will rub a little of this ointment into them.'

'What before we see any sign of the scab among them? I wouldn't do that if they were mine.'

'No more would I if they were yours,' replied George almost fiercely. 'But they are not yours Will Abner. They are unlucky George's.'

During the next three days four hundred sheep were clipped and anointed.

Jacky helped clip, but he would not wear gloves, and George would not let him handle the ointment without them, suspecting mercury.

At last George yielded to Abner's remonstrances, and left off shearing and anointing.

Abner altered his opinion when one day he found a sheep rubbing like mad against a tree, and before noon half-a-dozen at the same game. Those two wretched sheep had tainted the flock.

Abner hung his head when he came to George with this ill-omened news. He expected a storm of reproaches. But George was too deeply distressed for any petulances of anger.

‘It is my fault,’ said he, ‘I was the master, and I let my servant direct me. My own heart told me what to do, yet I must listen to a fool and a hireling that cared not for the sheep. How should he? they weren’t his, they were mine to lose and mine to save. I had my choice, I took it, I lost them: call Jacky and lets to work and save here and there one, if so be God shall be kinder to them than I have been.’

From that hour there was but little rest morning noon or night, it was nothing but an endless routine of anointing and washing washing and anointing sheep. To the credit of Mr. Thompson it must be told that of the four hundred who had been taken in time no single sheep died; but of the others a good many. There are incompetent shepherds as well as incompetent statesmen and doctors, though not so many. Abner was one of these. An acute Australian shepherd would have seen the more subtle signs of this terrible disease a day or two before the patient sheep began to rub themselves with fury against the trees and against each other; but Abner did not; and George did not profess to have a minute knowledge of the animal, or why pay a shepherd?

When this Herculean labour and battle had gone on for about a week, Abner came to George, and with a hang-dog look begged him to look out for another shepherd.

'Why Will! surely you won't think to leave me in this strait? Why three of us are hardly able for the work, and how can I make head against this plague with only the poor sav— with only Jacky that is first-rate at light work till he gets to find it dull, but can't lift a sheep and fling her into the water, as the like of us can?'

'Well ye see,' said Abner, doggedly, 'I have got the offer of a place with Mr. Meredith, and he won't wait for me more than a week.'

'He is a rich man Will, and I am a poor one,' said George, in a faint expostulating tone.'

Abner said nothing, but his face showed he had already considered this fact from his own point of view.

'He could spare you better than I can; but you are right to leave a falling house that you have helped to pull down.'

'I don't want to go all in a moment, I can stay a week till you get another.'

'A week! how can I get a shepherd in this wilderness at a week's notice; you talk like a fool.'

'Well I can't stay any longer. You know there is no agreement at all between us, but I'll stay a week to oblige you.'

'You'll oblige me, will you?' said George, with a burst of indignation; 'then oblige me by packing up your traps and taking your ugly face out of my sight before dinner-time this day. Stay my man, here are

your wages up to twelve o’clock to-day, take ’em and out of my sight you dirty rascal. Let me meet misfortune with none but friends by my side. Away with you, or I shall forget myself, and dirty my hands with your mean carcass.’

The hireling slunk off, and as he slunk, George stormed and thundered after him, ‘And wherever you go, may sorrow and sickness—no!’

George turned to Jacky who sat coolly by, his eyes sparkling at the prospect of a row.

‘Jacky,’ said he, and then he seemed to choke, and could not say another word.

‘Suppose I get the make thunder, then you shoot him.’

‘Shoot him! what for?’

‘Too much bungality,* shoot him dead. He let the sheep come that have my two fingers so on their backs;’ here Jacky made a v with his middle and forefinger, ‘so he kill the other sheep, yet still you not shoot him, that so stu id I call.’

‘Oh Jacky hush! don’t you know me better than to think I would kill a man for killing my sheep. Oh fie! oh fie! No Jacky, heaven forbid I should do the man any harm, but when I think of what he has brought on my head, and then to skulk and leave me in my sore strait and trouble, me that never gave him ill language as most masters would; and then Jacky, do you remember when he was sick how kind you and I were to him, and now to leave us. There I must go into the

* Stupidity.

house, and you come and call me out when that man is off the premises, not before. At twelve o'clock selfish Abner started to walk to Mr. Meredith's, a distance of thirty miles. Smarting under the sense of his contemptibleness and of the injury he was doing his kind poor master, he shook his fist at the house, and told Jacky he hoped the scab would rot the flock, and that done fall upon the bipeds, on his own black hide in particular. Jacky only answered with his eye. When the man was gone he called George.'

George's anger had soon died. Jacky found him reading a little book in search of comfort, and when they were out in the air Jacky saw that his eyes were rather red.

'Why you cry?' said Jacky. 'I very angry because you cry.'

'It is very foolish of me,' said George, apologetically, 'but three is a small company, and we in such trouble; and I thought I had made a friend of him. Often I saw he was not worth his wages, but out o' pity I wouldn't part with him when I could better have spared him than he me, and now—there no more about it. Work is best for a sore heart, and mine is sore and heavy too this day.'

Jacky put his finger to his head, and looked wise.

'First you listen me, this one time I speak a good many words. Dat stupid fellow know nothing, and so because you not shoot him a good way* behind you, very stupid.

* Long ago.

‘One,’ counted Jacky, touching his thumb, ‘he know nothing with these (pointing to his eyes.) Jacky know possum.* Jacky know kangaroo, know turkey, know snake, know a good many, some with legs like dis (four fingers), some with legs like dis (two fingers), dat stupid fellow know nothing but sheep, and not know sheep, let him die too much. Know nothing with ’um eyes.

‘One more (touching his forefinger). Know nothing with dis (touching his tongue). Jacky speak him good words, he speak Jacky bad words. Dat so stupid he know nothing with dis.

‘One more. You do him good things, he do you bad things; he know nothing with these (indicating his arms and legs as the seat of moral action,) so den because you not shoot him long ago now you cry; den because you cry Jacky angry. Yes, Jacky very good. Jacky a little good before he live with you. Since den very good, but when dat fellow know nothing, and now you cry, at the bottom† part Jacky a little angry, and Jacky go hunting a little not much direckly.’

With these words the savage caught up his tomahawk and two spears, and was going across country without another word, but George cried out in dismay,

‘Oh, stop a moment! What to-day, Jacky? Jacky, Jacky, now don’t ye go to-day. I know it is very dull for the likes of you, and you will soon leave me, but don’t ye go to-day; don’t set me against flesh and blood altogether.’

‘I come back when the sun there,’ pointing to th

* Opossum.

† At last.

East, 'but must hunt a little, not much. Jacky uncomfortable,' continued he, jumping at a word which from its size he thought must be of weight in any argument, 'a good deal uncomfortable suppose I not hunt a little dis day.'

'I say no more, I have no right, good-bye, take my hand, I shall never see you any more.'

'I shall come back when the sun there.'

'Ah! well I dare say you think you will. Good-bye Jacky; don't you stay to please me.'

Jacky glided away across country. He looked back once and saw George watching him. George was sitting sorrowful upon a stone, and as this last bit of humanity fell away from him and melted away in the distance, his heart died within him.

'He thinks he will come back to me, but when he gets in the open and finds the track of animals to hunt he will follow them wherever they go, and his poor shallow head won't remember this place nor me; I shall never see poor Jacky any more.'

The black continued his course for about four miles until a deep hollow hid him from George. Arrived here he instantly took a line nearly opposite to his first, and when he had gone about three miles on this tack he began to examine the ground attentively and to run about like a hound. After near half an hour of this he fell upon some tracks and followed them at an easy trot across the country for miles and miles, his eye keenly bent upon the ground.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUR story has to follow a little way an infinitesimal personage.

Abner, the ungratefullish one, with a bundle tied up in a handkerchief, strode stoutly away towards Mr. Meredith's grazing ground. 'I am well out of that place,' was his reflection. As he had been only once over the ground before he did not venture to relax his pace lest night should overtake him in a strange part. He stepped out so well that just before the sun set he reached the head of a broad valley that was all Meredith's: about three miles off glittered a white mansion set in a sea of pasture studded with cattle instead of sails. 'Ay! ay!' thought the ungratefullish one, 'no fear of the scab breaking up this master, I'm all right now.' As he chuckled over his prospects a dusky figure stole noiselessly from a little thicket, an arm was raised behind him—crosssh! a hard weapon came down on his scull, and he lay on his face with the blood trickling from his mouth and ears.

CHAPTER XX.

HE who a few months ago was so light-hearted and bright with hope now rose at daybreak for a work of Herculean toil as usual but no longer with the spirit that makes labour light. The same strength, the same dogged perseverance were there, but the sense of lost money lost time and invincible ill-luck oppressed him ; then too he was alone—everything had deserted him but misfortune.

‘ I have left my Susan and I have lost her, left the only friend I had or ever shall have in this hard world.’ This was his constant thought as doggedly but hopelessly he struggled against the pestilence. Single-handed and leaden-hearted he had to catch a sheep, to fling her down, to hold her down, to rub the ointment into her, and to catch another that had been rubbed yesterday and take her to the pool and fling her in and keep her in till every part of her skin was soaked.

Four hours of this drudgery had George gone through single-handed and leaden-hearted, when as he knelt over a kicking struggling sheep, he became conscious

of something gliding between him and the sun; he looked up and there was Jacky grinning.

George uttered an exclamation: ‘What come back! Well now that is very good of you I call. How do you do?’ and he gave him a great shake of the hand.

‘Jacky very well, Jacky not at all uncomfortable after him hunt a little.’

‘Then I am very glad you have had a day’s sport, leastways a night’s I call it, since it has made you comfortable Jacky.’

‘Oh! yes, very comfortable now,’ and his white teeth and bright eye proclaimed the relief and satisfaction his little trip had afforded his nature.

‘There Jacky if the ointment is worth the trouble it gives me rubbing of it in, that sheep won’t ever catch the scab I do think. Well, Jacky, seems to me I ought to ask your pardon, I did you wrong. I never expected you would leave the kangaroos and opossums for me once you were off. But I suppose fact is you haven’t quite forgotten Twofold Bay.’

‘Two fool bay!’ inquired Jacky, puzzled.

‘Where I first fell in with you. You made one in a hunt that day, only instead of hunting you was hunted and pretty close too, and if I hadn’t been a good cricketer and learn to fling true.—Why I do declare I think he has forgotten the whole thing shark and all.’

At the word shark a gleam of intelligence came to the black’s eye; it was succeeded by a look of wonder.

‘Shark come to eat me—you throw stone—so we

cat him. I see him now a little—a very little—dat a long way off—a very long way off. Jacky can hardly see him when he try a good deal. White fellow see a long way off behind him back, dat very curious.'

George coloured.

'You are right lad it was a long while ago and I am vexed for mentioning it. Well any way you *are* come back and you are welcome. Now you shall do a little of the light work, but I'll do all the heavy work, because I am used to it;' and indeed poor George did work and slave like Hercules; forty times that day he carried a full-sized sheep in his hands a distance of twenty yards and flung her into the water and splashed in and rubbed her back in the water.

The fourth day after Jacky's return George asked him to go all over the ground and tell him how many sheep he saw give signs of the fatal disorder.

About four o'clock in the afternoon Jacky returned driving before him with his spear a single sheep. The agility of both the biped and quadruped were droll; the latter every now and then making a rapid bolt to get back to the pasture and Jacky bounding like a buck and pricking her with a spear.

For the first time he found George doing nothing. 'Dis one scratch um back—only dis one.'

'Then we have driven out the murrain and the rest will live. A hard fight! Jacky, a hard fight! but we have won it at last. We will rub this one well; help me put her down for my head aches.'

After rubbing her a little George said 'Jacky, I

wish you would do it for me, for my head do ache so I can’t abide to hold it down and work too.’

After dinner they sat and looked at the sheep feeding.

‘No more dis,’ said Jacky gaily, imitating a sheep rubbing against a tree.

‘No! I have won the day; but I haven’t won it cheap. Jacky that fellow Abner was a bad man—an ungrateful man.’

These words George spoke with a very singular tone of gravity.

‘Never you mind you about him.’

‘No! I must try to forgive him; we are all great sinners; is it cold to-day?’

‘No! it is a good deal hot!’

‘I thought it must for the wind is in a kindly quarter. Well Jacky I am as cold as ice!’

‘Dat very curious.’

‘And my head do ache so I can hardly bear myself.’

‘You ill a little—soon be well.’

‘I doubt I shall be worse before I am better.’

‘Never you mind you. I go and bring something I know. We make it hot with water, den you drink it; and after dat you a good deal better.’

‘Do Jacky. I won’t take doctor’s stuff; it is dug out of the ground, and never was intended for man’s inside. But you get me something that grows in sight and I’ll take that, and don’t be long Jacky, for I am not well.’

Jacky returned towards evening with a bundle of simples. He found George shivering over a fire. He got the pot and began to prepare an infusion.

'Now you soon better,' said he.

'I hope so, Jacky,' said George very gravely, 'thank you all the same. Jacky, I haven't been not to say dry for the last ten days with me washing the sheep, and I have caught a terrible chill—a chill like death; and Jacky I have tried too much, I have abused my strength. I am a very strong man as men go, and so was my father; but he abused his strength and he was took just as I am took now, and in a week he was dead. I have worked hard ever since I came here, but since Abner left me at the pinch it hasn't been man's work, Jacky; it has been a wrestling-match from dawn to dark. No man could go on so and not break down; but I wanted so to save the poor sheep. Well, the sheep are saved; but—'

When Jacky's infusion was ready he made George take it and then lie down. Unfortunately the attack was too violent to yield to this simple remedy. Fever was upon George Fielding—fever in his giant shape; not as he creeps over the weak, but as he rushes on the strong. George had never a headache in his life before. Fever found him full of blood and turned it all to fire. He tossed—he raged—and forty-eight hours after his first seizure the strong man lay weak as a child, except during those paroxysms of delirium which robbed him of his reason while they lasted, and of his strength when they retired.

On the fourth day after a raging paroxysm he became suddenly calm, and looking up saw Jacky seated at some little distance, his bright eye fixed upon him.

'You better now?' inquired he with even more than

his usual gentleness of tone. ‘You not talk stupid things any more?’

‘What, Jacky, are you watching me?’ said the sick man. ‘Now I call that very kind of you. Jacky, I am not the man I was—we are cut down in a day like the ripe grass. How long is it since I was took ill?’

‘One, one, one, and one more day.’

‘Ay! Ay! My father lasted till the fifth day, and then— Jacky!’

‘Here Jacky! what you want?’

‘Go out on the hill and see whether any of the sheep are rubbing themselves.’

Jacky went out and soon returned.

‘Not see one rub himself.’

A faint gleam lighted George’s sunken eye.

‘That is a comfort. I hope I shall be accepted not to have been a bad shepherd, for I may say “I have given my life for my sheep.” Poor things.’

George dozed. Towards evening he woke, and there was Jacky just where he had seen him last.

‘I didn’t think you had cared so much for me, Jacky my boy.’

‘Yes, care very much for you. See, um make beef-water for you a good deal.’

And sure enough he had boiled down about forty pounds of beef and filled a huge calabash with the extract, which he set by George’s side.

‘And why are you so fond of me, Jacky? It isn’t on account of my saving your life, for you had forgotten that. What makes you such a friend to me?’

'I tell you. Often I go to tell you before, but many words, dat a good deal trouble. One when you make thunder the bird always die. One you take a sheep so and hold him up high. Um never see one more white fellow able do dat. One, you make a stone go and hit thing; other white fellow never hit. One, little horse come to you; other white fellow go to horse—horse run away. Little horse run to you, dat because you so good. One, Carlo fond of you. All day now he come in and go out, and say so (imitating a dog's whimper). He so uncomfortable because you lie down so. One, when you speak to Jacky you not speak big like white fellow, you speak small and like a fiddle, dat please Jacky's ear. One, when you look at Jacky always your face make like a hot day when dere no rain, dat please Jacky's eye; and so when Jacky see you stand up one day a good deal high and now lie down, dat makes him uncomfortable; and when he see you red one day and white dis day, dat make him uncomfortable a good deal; and when he see you so beautiful one day and dis day so ugly, dat make him so uncomfortable. He afraid you go away and speak no more good words to Jacky, and dat make Jacky feel a thing inside here (touching his breast). No more can breathe and want to do like the gins, but don't know how. Oh, dear! don't know how.'

'Poor Jacky! I do wish I had been kinder to you than I have. Oh, I am very short of wind, and my back is very bad!'

'When black fellow bad in um back he always die,' said Jacky, very gravely.

‘Ay,’ said George quietly. ‘Jacky, will you do one or two little things for me now?’

‘Yes, do um all.’

‘Give me that little book that I may read it. Thank you. Jacky, this is the book of my religion; and it was given to me by one I love better than all the world. I have disobeyed her—I have thought too little of what is in this book, and too much of this world’s gain. God forgive me! and I think he will, because it was for Susan’s sake I was so greedy of gain.’

Jacky looked on awestruck as George read the book of his religion.

‘Open the door, Jacky.’

Jacky opened the door; then coming to George’s side, he said with an anxious inquiring look and trembling voice,

‘Are you going to leave me, George?’

‘Yes, Jacky my boy,’ said George, ‘I doubt I am going to leave you. So now thank you and bless you for all kindness. Put your face close down to mine—there, I don’t care for your black skin. He who made mine made yours; and I feel we are brothers, and you have been one to me. Good-by, dear, and don’t stay here. You can do nothing more for your poor friend George.’

Jacky gave a little moan.

‘Yes, um can do a little more before he go and hide him face where there are a good deal of trees.’

Then Jacky went almost on tiptoe, and fetched another calabash full of water and placed it by George’s

head. Then he went very softly and fetched the heavy iron which he had seen George use in penning sheep, and laid it by George's side ; next he went softly and brought George's gun, and laid it gently by George's side down on the ground.

This done he turned to take his last look of the sick man now feebly dozing the little book in his drooping hand. But as he gazed nature rushed over the poor savage's heart and took it quite by surprise : even while bending over his white brother to look his last farewell with a sudden start he turned his back on him, and sinking on his hams he burst out crying and sobbing with a wild and terrible violence.

CHAPTER XXI.

FOR near an hour Jacky sat upon the ground, his face averted from his sick friend, and cried ; then suddenly he rose, and without looking at him went out at the door, and turning his face towards the great forests that lay forty miles distant eastward, he ran all the night, and long before dawn he was hid in the pathless woods.

A white man feels that grief, when not selfish, is honourable, and unconsciously he nurses such grief more or less ; but to simple-minded Jacky grief was merely a subtle pain, and to be got rid of as quickly as possible like any other pain.

He ran to the vast and distant woods, hoping to leave George's death a long way behind him, and so not see what caused his pain so plain as he saw it just now. It is to be observed that he looked upon George as dead.

The taking into his hand of the book of his religion, the kind embrace, the request that the door might be opened, doubtless for the disembodied spirit to pass out, all these rites were understood by Jacky to imply that

the last scene was at hand. Why witness it? it would make him still more uncomfortable. Therefore he ran and never once looked back and plunged into the impenetrable gloom of the eastern forests.

The white man had left Fielding to get a richer master. The half-reasoning savage left him to cure his own grief at losing him.

There he lay abandoned in trouble and sickness by all his kind. But one friend never stirred; a single-hearted single-minded non-reasoning friend.

Who was this pure-minded friend?

A dog.

Carlo loved George. They had lived together, they had sported together, they had slept side by side on the cold hard deck of the "Phoenix," and often they had kept each other warm, sitting crouched together behind a little bank, or a fallen tree, with the wind whistling and the rain shooting by their ears.

When day after day George came not out of the house Carlo was very uneasy. He used to patter in and out all day, and whimper pitifully, and often he sat in the room where George lay, and looked towards him and whined. But now when his master was left quite alone his distress and anxiety redoubled; he never went ten yards away from George. He ran in and out moaning and whining, and at last he sat outside the door and lifted up his voice and howled day and night continually. His meaner instincts lay neglected; he ate nothing; his heart was bigger than his belly; he would not leave his friend even to feed

himself. And still day and night without cease his passionate cry went up to heaven.

What passed in that single heart none can tell for certain but his Creator; nor what was uttered in that deplorable cry; love, sorrow, perplexity, dismay, all these perhaps, and something of prayer, for still he lifted his sorrowful face towards heaven as he cried out in sore perplexity distress and fear for his poor master—oh! o-o-o-h! o-o-o-o-h! o-o-o-o-o-o-o-h!

So we must leave awhile poor, honest, unlucky George, sick of a fever, ten miles from the nearest hut. Leather-heart has gone from him to be a rich man's hireling.

Shallow-heart has fled to the forest, and is hunting kangaroos with all the inches of his soul.

Single-heart sits fasting from all but grief before the door, and utters heart-rending lamentable cries to earth and heaven.

CHAPTER XXII.

—— GAOL is still a grim and castellated mountain of masonry, but a human heart beats and a human brain throbs inside it now.

Enter without fear of seeing children kill themselves, and bearded men faint like women, or weep like children—horrible sights.

The prisoners no longer crouch and cower past the officers, nor the officers look at them and speak to them as if they were dogs, as they do in most of these places, and used to here.

Open this cell. A woman rises with a smile! why a smile? Because for months an open door has generally let in, what is always a great boon to a separate prisoner—a human creature with a civil word. We remember when an open door meant ‘way for a ruffian and a fool to trample upon the solitary and sorrowful!’

What is this smiling personage doing? as I live she is watchmaking. A woman watchmaking, with neat and taper fingers, and glass at her eye sometimes, but not always, for in vision as well as in the sense of touch and patience nature has been bounteous to her. She is one

of four. Eight besides these four, were tried and found incapable of excellence in this difficult craft. They were put to other things; for permanent failures are not permitted in — gaol. The theory is, that every homo can turn some sort of labour to profit.

Difficulties occur often. Impossibilities will bar the way now and then; but there are so few real impossibilities. When a difficulty arises, the three hundred industrious arts and crafts are freely ransacked for a prisoner; ay!—ransacked as few rich men would be bothered to sift the seven or eight liberal professions, in order to fit a beloved son.

Here, as in the world, the average of talent is low. The majority can only learn easy things, and vulgar things, and some can do higher things, and a few can do beautiful things, and one or two have developed first-rate gifts and powers.

There are 25 shoemakers (male); 12 tailors, of whom 6 female; 24 weavers, of whom 10 female; 4 watch-makers, all female; 6 printers and composers, 5 female; 4 engrainers of wood, 2 female. (In this art we have the first artist in Britain, our old acquaintance Thomas Robinson. He has passed all his competitors by a simple process. Beautiful specimens of all the woods have been placed and kept before him, and for a month he has been forced to imitate nature with his eye never off her. His competitors in the world imitate nature from memory, from convention, or from tradition. By such processes truth and beauty are lost at each step down the ladder of routine. Mr. Eden gave clever

Tom at first starting the right end of the stick instead of letting him take the wrong.) 9 joiners and carpenters, 3 female; 3 who colour prints downright well, 1 female; 2 painters, 1 female; 3 pupils, shorthand writing, 1 female.

[Fancy these attending the Old Bailey and taking it all down solemn as judges.]

Workers in gutta percha, modellers in clay, washers and getters up of linen, hoe-makers, spade-makers, rake-makers, wood carvers, stonecutters, bakers, etc. etc. etc. etc. ad infinitum. Come to the hard-labour yard. Do you see those fifteen stables? there lurk in vain the rusty cranks: condemned first as liars they fell soon after into disrepute as weapons of $\frac{1}{2}$ -science to degrade minds and bodies. They lurk there grim as the used-up giants in "Pilgrim's Progress," and like them can't catch a soul.

Hark to the music of the shuttle and the useful loom. We weave linen cotton woollen linsey wolsey, and not to be behind the rogues outside cottonsey wolsey and cottonsey silksey; damask we weave, and a little silk and poplin, and Mary Baker velvet itself for a treat now and then. We of the loom relieve the county of all expense in keeping us, and enrich a fund for taking care of discharged industrious prisoners until such time as they can soften prejudices and obtain lucrative employment. The old plan was to kick a prisoner out and say—

'There dog! go without a rap among those who will look on you as a dog and make you starve or steal.

We have taught you no labour but crank, and as there are no cranks in the outside world, the world not being such an idiot as we are, you must fill your belly by means of the only other thing you have ever been taught—theft.'

Now the officers take leave of a discharged prisoner in English. Farewell! good-bye!—a contraction for God be wi' ye—etc. It used to be in French, Sans adieu! au revoir! and the like.

Having passed the merry useful looms open this cell. A she-thief looks up with an eye six times as mellow as when we were here last. She is busy gilding. See with what an adroit and delicate touch the jade slips the long square knife under the gossamer gold-leaf which she has blown gently out of the book and turns it over; and now she breathes gently and vertically on the exact centre of it, and the fragile yet rebellious leaf that has rolled itself up like a hedgehog is flattened by that human zephyr on the little leathern easel. Now she cuts it in three with vertical blade; now she takes her long flat brush, and applies it to her own hair once or twice; strange to say the camel-hair takes from this contact a soupçon of some very slight and delicate animal oil, which enables the brush to take up the gold-leaf, and the artist lays a square of gold in its place on the plaster bull she is gilding. Said bull was cast in the prison by another female prisoner who at this moment is preparing a green artificial meadow for the animal to stand in. These two girls had failed at the watchmaking. They had sight and the fine sensation

of touch required, but they lacked the caution patience and judgment so severe an art demanded; so their talents were directed elsewhere. This one is a first-rate gilder, she mistressed it entirely in three days.

The last thing they did in this way was an elephant. Cost of casting him, reckoning labour and the percentage he ought to pay to the mould, was 1*s.* 4*d.* Plaster chrome water-size and oil size, 3*d.*; gold-leaf 3*s.*; 1 foot of German velvet 4*d.*; thread needles and wear of tools 1*d.*; total 5*s.*

Said gold elephant standing on a purple cushion was subjected to a severe test of his value. He was sent to a low auction room in London. There he fell to the trade at 18*s.* This was a "knock-out" transaction; twelve buyers had agreed not to bid against one another in the auction room, a conspiracy illegal but customary. The same afternoon these twelve held one of their little private unlawful auctions over him; here the bidding was like drops of blood oozing from flints, but at least it was bonâ-fide, and he rose to 25*s.* The seven shillings premium was divided among the eleven sharpers. Sharper No. 12 carried him home, and sold him the very next day for 37*s.* to a lady who lived in Belgravia, but shopped in filthy alleys, misled perhaps by the phrase "dirt cheap."

Mr. Eden conceived him, two detected ones made him at a cost of 5*s.*, twelve undetected ones caught him first for 18*s.*, and now he stands in Belgravia, and the fair ejaculate over him 'What a duck!'

The aggregate of labour to make and gild this

elephant was not quite one woman's work (12 hours). Taking 18s. as the true value of the work, for in this world the workman has commonly to sell his production under the above disadvantages, forced sale and the conspiracies of the unimprisoned, we have still 13s. for a day's work by a woman.

From the bull greater things are expected. The cast is from the bull of the Vatican, a bull true to Nature, and Nature adorned the very meadows when she produced the bull. What a magnificent animal is a bull! what a dewlap! what a front! what clean pasterns! what fearless eyes! what a deep diapason is his voice! of which beholding this his true and massive effigy in —— gaol we are reminded. When he stands muscular, majestic, sonorous, gold, in his meadow pied with daisies, it shall not be 'sweet' and 'love' and 'duck' words of beauty but no earthly signification; it shall be 'There, I forgive Europa.'

And need I say there was more aimed at in all this than pecuniary profit. Mr. Eden held that the love of production is the natural specific antidote to the love of stealing. He kindled in his prisoners the love of producing, of what some by an abuse of language call 'creating.' And the producers rose in the scale of human beings. Their faces showed it, the untamed look melted away. The white of the eye showed less, and the pupil and iris more and better quality.

Gold-leaf when first laid on adheres in visible squares with uncouth edges, a ragged affair; then the gilder takes a camel-hair brush, and under its light and

rapid touch the work changes as under a diviner's rod, so rapidly and majestically come beauty and finish over it. Perhaps no other art has so delicious a one minute as this is to the gilder. The first work our prisoner gilt she screamed with delight several times at this crisis. She begged to have the work left in her cell one day at least—

'It lights up the cell and lights up my heart.'

'Of course it does' said Mr. Eden. 'Aha! what there are greater pleasures in the world than sinning are there?'

'That there are. I never was so pleased in my life. May I have it a few minutes.'

'My child, you shall have it till its place is taken by others like it. Keep it before your eyes, feed on it, and ask yourself which is best, to work and add something useful or beautiful to the world's material wealth, or to steal; to be a little benefactor to your kind and yourself, or a little vermin preying on the industrious. Which is best?'

'I'll never take while I can make.'

This is of course but a single specimen out of scores. To follow Mr. Eden from cell to cell, from mind to mind, from sex to sex, would take volumes and volumes. I only profess to reveal fragments of such a man. He never hoped from the mere separate cell the wonders that dreamers hope. It was essential to the reform of prisoners that moral contagion should be check-mated, and the cell was the mode adopted because it is the laziest, cheapest, selfishist, and cruelest

way of doing this. That no discretion was allowed him to let the converted or the well-disposed mix and sympathise, and compare notes, and confirm each other in good under a watchful officer’s eye; this he thought a frightful blunder of the system.

Generally he held the good effect of separate confinement to be merely negative; he laughed to scorn the chimera that solitude is an active agent, capable of converting a rogue. Shut a rogue from rogues and let honest men in upon him the honest men get a good chance to convert him, but if they do succeed it was not solitude that converted him but healing contact. The moments that most good comes to him are the moments his solitude is broken.

He used to say solitude will cow a rogue and suspend his overt acts of theft by force, and so make him to a non-reflector seem no longer a thief; but the notion of the cell effecting permanent cures might honestly be worded thus:—‘I am a lazy self-deceiver, and want to do by machinery and without personal fatigue what St. Paul could only do by working with all his heart, with all his time, with all his wit, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his himself.’ Or thus:—‘Confine the leopards in separate cages, Jock; *the cages* will take their spots out while ye’re sleeping.’

Generally this was Mr. Eden’s theory of the cell—a check to further contamination, but no more. He even saw in the cell much positive ill which he set himself to qualify.

‘Separate confinement breeds monstrous egotism,’

said he, ‘and egotism hardens the heart. You can’t make any man good if you never let him say a kind word or do an unselfish action to a fellow-creature. Man is an acting animal. His real moral character all lies in his actions, and none of it in his dreams or cogitations. Moral stagnation or cessation of all bad acts and of all good acts is a state on the borders of every vice and a million miles from virtue.’

His reverence attacked the petrification and egotism of the separate cell as far as the shallow system of this prison let him. First, he encouraged prisoners to write their lives for the use of the prison; these were weeded if necessary (the editor was strong-minded and did not weed out the red poppies); printed and circulated in the gaol. The writer’s number was printed at the foot if he pleased, but never his name. Biography begot a world of sympathy in the prison.—Second, he talked one prisoner acquainted with another prisoner’s character, talked about No. 80 to No. 60, and would sometimes say—

‘Now could you give No. 60 any good advice on this point?’

Then if 80’s advice was good he would carry it to 60, and 60 would think all the more of it that it came from one of his fellows.

Then in matters of art he would carry the difficulties of a beginner or a bungler to a proficient, and the latter would help the former. The pleasure of being kind on one side, a touch of gratitude on the other, seeds of interest and sympathy in both. Then such as had pro-

duced pretty things were encouraged to lend them to other cells to adorn them and stimulate the occupants.

For instance No. 140, who gilded the bull, was reminded that No. 120, who had cast him, had never had the pleasure of setting him on her table in her gloomy cell, and so raising its look from dungeon to workshop. Then No. 140 said—

‘ Poor No. 120 ! that is not fair ; she shall have him half the day or more if you like, sir.’

Thus a grain of self-denial justice and charity was often drawn into the heart of a cell through the very keyhole.

No. 19 Robinson did many a little friendly office for other figures, received their thanks, and above all obliging these figures warmed and softened his own heart.

You might hear such dialogues as this :—

No. 24. ‘ And how is poor old No. 50 to-day (Strutt)?’

Mr. Eden. ‘ Much the same.’

No. 24. ‘ Do you think you will bring him round, sir?’

Mr. Eden. ‘ I have great hopes ; he is much improved since he had the garden and the violin.’

No. 24. ‘ Will you give him my compliments, sir? No. 24’s compliments and tell him I bid him “ never say die?”’

Mr. Eden. ‘ Well ——, how are you this morning?’

‘ I am a little better sir. This room (the infirmary) is so sweet and airy, and they give me precious nice things to eat and drink.’

' Are the nurses kind to you?'

' That they are, sir, kinder than I deserve.'

' I have a message for you from No. — on your corridor?'

' No! have you, sir?'

' He sends his best wishes for your recovery.'

' Now that is very good of him.'

' And he would be glad to hear from yourself how you feel.'

' Well, sir, you tell him I am a trifle better, and God bless him for troubling his head about me.'

In short his reverence reversed the Hawes system. Under that a prisoner was divested of humanity and became a number, and when he fell sick the sentiment created was, 'The figure written on the floor of that cell looks faint.' When he died or was murdered, 'there is such and such a figure rubbed off our slate.'

Mr. Eden made these figures signify flesh and blood even to those who never saw their human faces. When he had softened a prisoner's heart then he laid the deeper truths of Christianity to that heart. They would not adhere to ice or stone or brass. He knew that till he had taught a man to love his brother whom he had seen he could never make him love God whom he has not seen. To vary the metaphor his plan was first warm and soften your wax, then begin to shape it after heaven's pattern. The old-fashioned way is freeze, petrify and mould your wax by a single process. Not that he was mawkish. No man rebuked sin more terribly than he often rebuked it in many of these cells;

and when he did so, see what he gained by the personal kindness that preceded these terrible rebukes! The rogue said—

‘What! is it so bad that his reverence, who I know has a regard for me, rebukes me for it like this?—why, it must be bad indeed.’

A loving friend’s rebuke is a rebuke, sinks into the heart, and convinces the judgment; an enemy’s or stranger’s rebuke is invective, and irritates not converts. The great vice of the new prisons is general self-deception varied by downright calculating hypocrisy. A shallow zealot like Mr. Lepel is sure to drive the prisoners into one or other of these. It was Mr. Eden’s struggle to keep them out of it. He froze cant in the bud. Puritanical burglars tried Scriptural phrases on him as a matter of course, but they soon found it was the very worst lay they could get upon in —— gaol. The notion that a man can jump from the depths of vice up to the climax of righteous habits spiritual-mindedness at one leap shocked his sense and terrified him for the daring dogs that profess these saltatory powers and the geese that believe it. He said to such—

‘Let me see you crawl heavenwards first, then walk heavenwards; it will be time enough to soar when you have lived soberly honestly piously a year or two—not here where you are tied hands feet and tongue, but free among the world’s temptations. He had no blind confidence in learned-by-heart texts.

‘Many a scoundrel has a good memory,’ said he.

Here he was quite opposed to his friend Lepel. This

gentleman attributed a sort of physical virtue to Holy Writ poured anyhow into a human vessel. His plan of making a thief honest will appear incredible to a more enlightened age; yet it is widely accepted (A.D. 1854) and its advocates call Mr. Eden a dreamer. It was this: he came into a cell cold and stern and set the rogues a lot of texts. Those that learned a great many he called good prisoners, and those that learned few black sheep; and the prisoners soon found out that their life, bitter as it was, would be bitterer if they did not look sharp and learn a good many texts. So they learned lots, and the slyest scoundrels learned the most.

'Why not?' said they; 'in these cursed holes we have nothing better to do and it is the only way to get the parson's good word,' and that is always worth having in gaol.

One rogue on getting out explained his knowledge of five hundred texts thus:—

'What did it hurt me learning texts? I'd just as lieve be learning texts as turning a crank, and as soon be d—d as either.'

This fellow had been one of Mr. Lepel's sucking saints, a show prisoner. The Bible and brute force—how odd they sound together! Yet such was the Lepel system humbug apart! Put a thief in a press between an Old Testament and a New Testament: turn the screw, crush the texts in, and the rogue's vices out! Conversion made easy! What a wonder he opposes cunning cloaked with religion to brutality cloaked under religion. Ay, brutality and laziness and selfishness,

all these are the true foundation of that system. Selfishness—for such a man won’t do anything he does not like. No! Why should I make myself “all things to all men” to save a soul? I will save them this one way or none—this is my way and they shall all come to it,’ says the reverend Procrustes, forgetting that if the heart is not won in vain is the will crushed; or perhaps not caring so that he gets his own way.

To work on Mr. Eden’s plan is a herculean effort day by day repeated; but to set texts is easy, easier even than to learn them—and how easy that is appears from the multitude of incurable felons who have swapped texts for tickets-of-leave. Messieurs Lepel, who teach solitary depressed sinners the Bible with screw and lifted lash and no love nor pity, a word in your ear. Begin a step higher. Go first to some charitable priest and at his feet learn that Bible yourselves!

Forgive my heat dear reader. I am not an Eden, and these fellows rile me when I think of the good they might do, and they do nothing but force hypocrisy upon men who were bad enough without that. I allow a certain latitude, don’t want to swim in hot water by quarrelling with every madman or every dunce, but I do doubt any man’s right to combine contradictory vices. Now these worthies are stupid yet wild, thick-headed yet delirious—tortoises and march hares.

My sketch of Mr. Eden and his ways is feeble and unworthy. But I conclude it with one master-stroke of eulogy—He was the opposite of these men.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE left Thomas Robinson writing his life. He has written it. It has been printed by prisoners and circulated among prisoners. One copy lay in Robinson's cell till he left the prison, and to this copy were appended Mr. Eden's remarks in MS.

This autobiography is a self-drawn portrait of a true Bohemian and his mind from boyhood up to the date when he fell into my hands.

Unfortunately we cannot afford so late in our story to make any retrograde step. The "Autobiography of a Thief" must therefore be thrust into my Appendix or printed elsewhere.

The reader has seen Robinson turned to a fiend by cruelty, and turned back to a man by humanity.

On this followed many sacred, softening, improving lessons, and as he loved Mr. Eden his heart was open to them.

Most prisoners are very sensible of genuine kindness and docile as wax in the hands of those who show it.

They are the easiest class in the world to impress: the difficulty is to make the impression permanent.

But the people who pretend to you that kindness does not greatly affect persuade and help convince them, HAVE NEVER TRIED ANYTHING BUT BRUTALITY, and never will, for nothing greater wiser or better is in them.

I will now indicate the other phases through which his mind passed in —— gaol.

Being shown that his crimes were virtually the cause of Mary’s hapless life and untimely death, and hard pressed by his father confessor, he fell into religious despondency : believed his case desperate, and his sins too many for heaven’s mercy.

Of all states of mind this was the one Mr. Eden most dreaded. He had observed that the notion they cannot be reconciled to God and man is the cause of prisoners’ recklessness and one great means by which gaol officers and society, England A.D. 1854, confirm them in ill.

He soothed and cheered the poor fellow with many a hopeful message from the gospel of mercy, and soon drew him out of the Slough of Despond, but he drew him out with so eager an arm that up went this impressionable personage from despond to the fifth heaven. He was penitent, forgiven, justified, sanctified, all in three weeks.

Moreover he now fell into a certain foul habit. Of course Scripture formed a portion of his daily reading and discourse with the chaplain : Robinson had a memory that seized and kept everything like a vice, so now a text occurred to him for every occasion, and he

interwove them with all his talk. Your shallow observers would have said—'What a hypocrite!'

Not a hypocrite oh Criticaster, but a chameleon! who had been months out of the atmosphere of vice and in an atmosphere of religion.

His reverence broke him of this nasty habit of chattering Bible, and generally cooled him down.

Finally he became sober, penitent for his past life, and firmly resolved to lead a better.

With this began to mingle ambition to rise very high in the world and a violent impatience to begin.

Through all these phases ran one excellent and saving thing, a genuine attachment to his good friend the chaplain. The attachment was reciprocal, and there was something touching in the friendship of two men so different in mind and worldly station. But they had suffered together. And indeed a much more depraved prisoner than Robinson would have loved such a benefactor and brother as Eden; and many a scoundrel in this place did love him as well as he could love anything; and as to the other the clue to him is simple.

While the vulgar self-deceiving moralist loathes the detected criminal, and never (whatever he may think) really rises to abhorrence of crime, the saint makes two steps upwards towards the mind of heaven itself, abhors crime, and loves pities and will not despair of the criminal.

But besides this Robinson was an engaging fellow, full of thought and full of facts, and the Reverend

Francis Tender-Conscience often spent an extra five minutes in his cell and then reproached himself for letting the more interesting personage rob other depressed and thirsty souls of those drops of dew.

One day Mr. Eden, who had just entered the cell, said to Robinson—‘Give me your hand. It is as I feared, your nerves are going.’

‘Are they?’ said Robinson ruefully.

‘Do you not observe that you are becoming tremulous?’

‘I notice that when my door is opened suddenly it makes me shake a little, and twitches come in my thigh.’

‘I feared as much. It is not every man that can bear separate confinement for twelve months; you cannot.’

‘I shall have to, whether I can or not.’

‘Will you?’

Three days after this Mr. Eden came into his cell and said with a sad smile ‘I have good news for you; you are going to leave me.’

‘Oh, your reverence! is that good news?’

‘Those who have the disposal of you are beginning to see that all punishment (except hanging) is for the welfare of the culprit, and must never be allowed to injure him. Strutt left the prison for my house a fortnight ago, and you are to cross the water next week.’

‘Oh, your reverence! heaven forgive me for feeling glad.’

'For being human, eh, my poor fellow?'

In the course of this conversation Mr. Eden frankly regretted that Robinson was going so soon.

'Four months more prison would have made you safer, and I would have kept you here till the last minute of your sentence for the good of your soul,' said he grimly; 'but your body and nerves might have suffered' added he tenderly; 'we must do all for the best.'

A light burst on Robinson. 'Why, your reverence,' cried he, 'is it for fear? Why you don't ever think that I shall turn rogue again after I get out of prison?'

'You are going among a thousand temptations.'

'What! do you really think all your kindness has been wasted on me? Why, sir, if a thousand pounds lay there I would not stretch out my hand to take one that did not belong to me. How ungrateful you must think me, and what a fool into the bargain after all my experience!'

'Ungrateful you are not, but you are naturally a fool—a weak flexible fool: a man with a tenth of your gifts would lead you by the nose into temptation. But I warn you if you fall now conscience will prick you as it never yet has; you will be miserable, and yet though miserable perhaps will never rise again, for remorse is not penitence.'

Robinson was so hurt at this want of confidence that he said nothing in reply, and then Mr. Eden felt sorry he had said so much, 'for after all,' thought he, 'these are mere misgivings; by uttering them I only pain

him, I can't make him share them : let me think what I can do.'

That very day he wrote to Susan Merton. The letter contained the following:—'Thomas Robinson goes to Australia next week; he will get a ticket of leave almost immediately on landing. I am in great anxiety; he is full of good resolves, but his nature is unstable, yet I should not fear to trust him anywhere if I could but choose his associates. In this difficulty I have thought of George Fielding. You know I can read characters in people's words and deeds, and though you never summed George up to me, his sayings and doings reveal him to me. He is a man in whom honesty is engrained. Poor Robinson with such a companion would be as honest as the day, and a useful friend, for he is full of resources. Then, dear friend, will you do a Christian act and come to our aid. I want you to write a note to Mr. Fielding and let this poor fellow take it to him. Armed with this my convert will not be shy of approaching the honest man, and the exile will not hate me for this trick, will he? I send you enclosed the poor clever fool's life written by himself and printed by my girls. Read it and tell me are we wrong in making every effort to save such a man?' etc.

By return of post came a reply from Susan Merton, full of pity for Robinson and affectionate zeal to co-operate in any way with her friend. Enclosed was a letter addressed to George Fielding, the envelope not closed. Mr. Eden slipped in a bank-note and a very small envelope and closed it, placed it in a larger

envelope, sealed that and copied the first address on its cover.

He now gave Robinson more of his time than ever and seemed to cling to him with almost a motherly apprehension. Robinson noticed it and felt it very very much, and his joy at getting out of prison oozed away more and more as the day drew near.

That day came at last. Robinson was taken by Evans to the chaplain's room to bid him farewell. He found him walking about the room in deep thought.

'Robinson, when you are thousands of miles from me bear this in mind, that if you fall again you will break my heart.'

'I know it sir; I know it; for you would say "If I could not save him who can I hope to?"'

'You would not like to break my heart, to discourage your friend and brother in the good work, the difficult work.'

'I would rather die; if it is to be so I pray heaven to strike me dead in this room while I am fit to die.'

'Don't say that; live to repair your crimes and to make me prouder of you than a mother of her first-born.'

He paused and walked the room in silence. Presently he stopped in front of Robinson.

'You have often said you owed me something.'

'My life and my soul's salvation' was the instant reply.

'I ask a return; square the account with me.'

'That I can never do.'

‘You can! I will take two favours in return for all you say I have done for you. No idle words but yes or no upon your honour. Will you grant them or won’t you?’

‘I will upon my honour.’

‘One is that you will pray very often, not only morning and evening but at sunset, at that dangerous hour to you when evil association begins; at that hour honest men retire out of sight and rogues come abroad like vermin and wild beasts; but most of all at any hour of the day or night a temptation comes near you, at that moment pray! Don’t wait to see how strong the temptation is, and whether you can’t conquer it without help from above. At the sight of an enemy put on heavenly armour—pray! No need to kneel or to go apart. Two words secretly, cast heavenwards, “Lord help me,” are prayer. Will you so pray?’

‘Yes!’

‘Then give me your hand; here is a plain gold ring to recall this sacred promise; put it on, wear it, and look at it, and never lose it or forget your promise.’

‘Them that take it must cut my hand off with it.’

‘Enough, it is a promise. My second request is that the moment you are free you will go and stay with an honest man.’

‘I ask no better sir, if he will have me.’

‘George Fielding; he has a farm near Bathurst.’

‘George Fielding sir? He affronted me when I was in trouble. It was no more than I deserved. I forgive him; but you don’t know the lad, sir. He

would not speak to me ; he would not look at me. He would turn his back on me if we ran against one another in a wilderness.'

'Here is a talisman that will insure you a welcome from him—a letter from the woman he loves. Come, yes or no?'

'I will sir, for your sake, not for theirs. Sir do pray give me something harder to do for you than these two things?'

'No, I won't overweight you nor encumber your memory with pledges—these two and no more. And here we part. See what it is to sin against society. I whom your conversation has so interested, to whom your company is so agreeable—in one word I who love you, can find no kinder word to say to you to-day than this—let me never see your face again ; let me never hear your name in the world.'

His voice trembled as he said these words and he wrung Robinson's hand, and Robinson groaned and turned away.

'So now I can do no more for you, I must leave the rest to God.' And with these words, for the second time in their acquaintance, the good soul kneeled down and prayed aloud for this man. And this time he prayed at length with ardour and tenderness unspeakable. He prayed as for a brother on the brink of a precipice. He wrestled with heaven, and ere he concluded he heard a subdued sound near him and it was poor Robinson, who touched and penetrated by such angelic love and awe-struck to hear a good man

pour out his very soul at the mercy-seat of heaven had crept timidly to his side and knelt there, bearing his mute part in this fervent supplication.

As Mr. Eden rose from his knees Evans knocked gently at the door: he had been waiting some minutes but had heard the voice of prayer and reverently forbore to interrupt it. At his knock the priest and the thief started. The priest suddenly held out both his hands; the thief bowed his head and kissed them many times, and on this they parted hastily with swelling hearts and not another word except the thousands that their moist eyes exchanged in one single look--the last.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ship was to sail in a week, and meantime Robinson was in the hulks at Portsmouth. Now the hulks are a disgrace to Europe and a most incongruous appendage to a system that professes to cure by separate confinement. One or two of the worst convicts made the usual overtures of evil companionship to Robinson. These were coldly declined ; and it was a good sign that Robinson, being permitted by the regulations to write one letter, did not write to any of his old pals in London or elsewhere, but to Mr. Eden. He told him that he regretted his quiet cell where his ears were never invaded with blasphemy and indecency things he never took pleasure in even at his worst, and missed his reverence's talk sadly. He concluded by asking for some good books by way of antidote.

He received no answer while at Portsmouth, but the vessel having sailed and lying two days off Plymouth, his name was called just before she weighed again and a thick letter handed to him. He opened it eagerly and two things fell on the deck—a sovereign and a

tract. The sovereign rolled off and made for the sea. Robinson darted after it and saved it from the deep and the surrounding rogues. Then he read a letter which was also in the enclosure. It was short: in it Mr. Eden told him he had sent him the last tract printed in the prison. 'It is called "The Wages of Sin are Death."' It is not the same one you made into cards; that being out of print and the author dead I have been tempted by that good true title to write another. I think you will value it none the less for being written by me and printed by our brothers and sisters in this place. I enclose one pound that you may not be tempted for want of a shilling.'

Robinson looked round for the tract; it was not to be seen; nobody had seen it. N.B. It had been through a dozen light-fingered hands already and was now being laughed at and blasphemed over by two filthy ruffians behind a barrel on the lower deck. Robinson was first in a fury and then, when he found it was really stolen from him, he was very much cut up. 'I wish I had lifted it and let the money roll. However,' thought he, 'if I keep quiet I shall hear of it.'

He did hear of it, but he never saw it; for one of these hardened creatures that had got hold of it had a spite against Robinson for refusing his proffered amity, and the malicious dog after keeping it several hours, hearing Robinson threaten to inform against whoever had taken it, made himself safe and gratified his spite by flinging it into the Channel.

This too came in due course to Robinson's ears. He moralized on it. 'I made the first into the devil's books,' said he, 'and now a child of the devil has robbed me of the second. I shan't get a third chance. I would give my sovereign and more to see what his reverence says about "The wages of sin are death." The very title is a sermon. I pray Heaven the dirty hand that robbed me of it may rot off at the—no! I forgot. Bless and curse not!'

And now Robinson was confined for five months in a wooden prison with the scum of our gaols. No cell to take refuge in from evil society. And in that wretched five months this perpetual contact with criminals, many of them all but incurable, took the gloss off him. His good resolutions were unshaken, but his repugnance to evil associates became gradually worn away.

At last they landed at Sydney. They were employed for about a fortnight in some government works, a mile from the town; and at the end of that time, he was picked out by a gentleman who wanted a servant.

Robinson's work was to call him not too early, to clean his boots, go on errands into the town, and be always in the way till five o'clock. From that hour until about two in the morning Mr. Miles devoted to amusement, returning with his latch key, and often rousing the night owl and his servant with a bacchanalian or Anacreontic melody. In short Mr. Miles was a loose fish; a bachelor who had recently inherited the fortune of an old screw his uncle, and was spending

thrift in all the traditional modes. Horses dogs women and cards at the head of the list.

He was a good-natured creature, and one morning as he brought him up his hot water and his soda-water Robinson ventured on a friendly remonstrance.

Mr. Miles flung canting rogue and half-a-dozen oaths and one boot at his head, and was preparing to add a tumbler when his mentor whipped into the lobby.

Robinson could not have fallen to a worse master than this, whose irregularities were so regular that his servant had always seven hours to spend in the town as he pleased. There he was often solicited to join in depredations on property. For in the first place he found half his old acquaintances were collected by the magic of the law on this spot of earth.

Robinson took a particular pride in telling these gentlemen that he had no objection to taking a friendly glass with them, and talking over old times, but that as for taking what did not belong to him all that was over for ever. In short he improved on Mr. Eden's instructions. Instead of flying from temptation like a coward conscious of weakness, he nobly faced it, and walked cool collected and safe on the edge of danger.

One good result of this was that he spent his wages every month faster than he got them, and spent the clothes his master gave him, and these were worth more than his wages, for Mr. Miles was going the pace, wore nothing after the gloss was off it. But Robinson had never lived out of prison at less than five hundred per

annum, and the evening is a good time in the day for spending money in a town, and his evenings were all his own.

One evening a young tradeswoman with whom he was flirting passing himself off for a merchant's clerk tremendously busy could only get out in the evening; this young woman, whom he had often solicited to go to the theatre, consented.

'I could go with you to-morrow, my sister and I,' said she.

Robinson expressed his delight, but consulting his pockets found he had not the means of paying for their seats, and he could not pawn any clothes for he had but two sets. One (yellowish) that government compelled him to wear by daylight, and one a present from his master (black). That together with a moustache admitted him into the bosom of society at night. What was to be done? Propose to the ladies to pay, that was quite without precedent. Ask his master for an advance, impossible. His master was gone kangaroo hunting for three days. Borrow some of his master's clothes and pawn them, that was too like theft. He would pawn his ring, it would only be for a day or two, and he would not spend a farthing more till he had got it back.

He pawned Mr. Eden's ring; it just paid for their places at the theatre, where they saw the living puppets of the colony mop and mow and rant under the title of acting. This was so interesting that Robinson was thinking of his ring the whole time, and how to

get it back. The girls agreed between themselves they had never enjoyed so dull a cavalier.

The next day a line from Mr. Miles to say that he should not be back for a week. No hope of funds from him. So Robinson pawned his black coat and got back his ring; and as the trousers and waistcoat were no use now, he pawned them for pocket-money, which soon dissolved.

Mr. Robinson now was out of spirits.

‘Service is not the thing for me. I am of an active turn, I want to go into business that will occupy me all day long—business that requires some head. Even his reverence, the first man in the country, acknowledged my talents, and what is the vent for them here? The blacking-bottle.’

CHAPTER XXV.

IN a low public outside the town in a back room with their arms on the table and their low foreheads nearly touching sat whispering two men—types: one had the deep-sunk colourless eyes, the protruding cheek-bones, the shapeless mouth, and the broad chin good in itself but bad in the above connection; the other had the vulpine chin, and the fiendish eyebrows descending on the very nose in two sharp arches. Both had the restless eye, both the short-cropped hair society's comment, congruous and auxiliary though in itself faint by the side of habit's seal and Nature's.

A small north window dimly lighted the gloomy uncouth cabin, and revealed the sole furniture: four chairs too heavy to lift too thick to break, and a table discoloured with the stains of a thousand filthy debauches and dotted here and there with the fresh ashes of pipes and cigars.

In this appropriate frame behold two felons putting their heads together: by each felon's side smoked in a glass, hot with heat and hotter with alcohol, the enemy of man. It would be difficult to give their dialogue,

for they spoke in thieves’ Latin. The substance was this :

They had scent of a booty in a house that stood by itself three miles out of the town. But the servants were incorruptible, and they could not get access to inspect the premises, which were intricate. Now your professional burglar will no more venture upon unexplored premises than a good seaman will run into an unknown channel without pilot soundings or chart. It appeared from the dialogue that the two men were acquainted with a party who knew these premises, having been more than once inside them with his master.

The more rugged one objected to this party.

‘He is no use, he has turned soft. I have heard him refuse a dozen good plants the last month. Besides I don’t wan’t a canting son of a gun for my pal—ten to one if he does turn tail and perhaps split.’—N.B. All this not in English but in thieves’ cant, with an oath or a nasty expression at every third word. The sentences measled with them.

‘You don’t know how to take him,’ replied he of the Mephistophiles’ eye-brow. ‘He won’t refuse me.’

‘Why not?’

‘He is an old pal of mine, and I never found the thing I could not persuade him to. He does not know how to say me nay—you may bully him and queer him till all is blue, and he won’t budge, and that is the lay you have been upon with him. Now I shall pull a long face—make up a story—take him by his soft bit—

tell him I can't get on without him, and patter old lang syne to him : then we'll get a fiddle and lots of whiskey, and when we have had a reel and he has shaken his foot on the floor, and drank a gill or two, you will see him thaw, and then you leave him to me and don't put in your jaw to spoil it. If we get him it will be all right, he is No. 1 ; his little finger has seen more than both our carcasses put together.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

FOUR days after this mephistopheles with a small m and brutus with a little b sat again in the filthy little cabin where men hatch burglaries—but this time the conference wore an air of expectant triumph.

‘ Didn’t I tell you?’

‘ You didn’t do it easy.’

‘ No, I had almost to go on my knees to him.’

‘ He isn’t worth so much trouble.’

‘ He is worth it ten times over. Look at this,’ and the speaker produced a plan of the premises they were plotting against. ‘ Could you have done this?’

‘ I don’t say I could.’

‘ Could any man you know have done it but this one? See here is every room and every door and window and passage put down, and what sort of keys and bolts and fastenings to each.’

‘ How came he to know so much ; he never was in the house but twice.’

‘ A top-sawyer like him looks at everything with an eye to business : if he was in a church he’d twig the candlesticks and the fastenings, while the rest were mooning into the parson’s face—he can’t help it.’

'Well he may be a top-sawyer, but I don't like him. See how loth he was, and when he did agree how he turned to and drank as if he would drown his pluck before it could come to anything.'

'Wait till you see him work. He will shake all that nonsense to blazes when he finds himself out under the moon with the swag on one side and the gallows on the other.'

To go back a little: Mr. Miles did not return at the appointed day; and Robinson who had no work to do, and could not amuse himself without money, pawned Mr. Eden's ring. He felt ashamed and sorrowful, but not so much so as the first time.

This evening as he was strolling moodily through the suburbs, a voice hailed him in tones of the utmost cordiality. He looked up and there was an old pal, with whom he had been associated in many a merry bout and pleasant felony; he had not seen the man for two years; a friendly glass was offered and accepted: two girls were of the party, to oblige whom Robinson's old acquaintance sent for Blind Bill, the fiddler, and soon Robinson was dancing and shouting with the girls like mad—'high cut,' 'side cut,' 'heel and toe,' 'sailor's fling,' and the double shuffle.

He did not leave till three in the morning, and after a promise to meet the same little party again next evening,—to dance and drink, and drive away dull care.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON a certain evening some days later, the two men whose faces were definitions sat on a bench outside that little public in the suburbs—one at the end of a clay-pipe, the other behind a pewter mug.

It was dusk.

‘He ought to be here soon,’ said the one into whose forehead holes seemed dug and little bits of some vitreous substance left at the bottom. ‘Well, mate,’ cried he harshly, ‘what do you want that you stick to us so tight?’ This was addressed to a pedlar who had been standing opposite showing contents of his box with a silent eloquence. Now this very asperity made the portable shopman say to himself, ‘wants me out of the way, perhaps buy me out.’

So he stuck where he was, and exhibited his wares—

‘We don’t want your gim-cracks’ said mephistopheles quietly.

The man eyed his customers; and did not despair.

‘But gents’ said he, ‘I have got other things besides gim-cracks; something that will suit you if you can read.’

'Of course we can read,' replied sunken-eyes haughtily; and in fact they had been too often in gaol to escape this accomplishment.

The pedlar looked furtively in every direction; and after this precaution pressed a spring and brought a small drawer out from the bottom of his pack.

The two rogues winked at one another.

Out of the drawer the pedlar whipped a sealed packet.

'What is it' asked mephistopheles, beginning to take an interest—

'Just imported from England,' said the pedlar, a certain pomp mingling with his furtive and mysterious manner.

'—— England,' was the other's patriotic reply.

'And translated from the French.'

'That is better! but what is it?'

'Them that buy it—they will see!'

'Something flash?'

'Rather I should say.'

'Is there plenty about the women in it?'

The trader answered obliquely.

'What are we obliged to keep it dark for?'—the other put in. 'Why of course there is.'

'Well!' said sunken-eyes affecting carelessness.

'What do you want for it? Got sixpence Bill.'

'I sold the last to a gentleman for three-and-sixpence. But as this is the last I've got say half-a-crown.'

Sunken-eyes swore at the pedlar.

'What half-a-crown for a book no thicker than a quire of paper?'

‘Only half-a-crown for a thing I could be put in prison for selling. Is not my risk to be paid as well as my leaves?’

This logic went home, and after a little higgling two shillings was offered and accepted, but in the very act of commerce the trader seemed to have a misgiving.

‘I daren’t do it unless you promise faithfully never to tell you had it of me. I have got a character to lose, and I would not have it known, not for the world, that James Walker had sold such loose—licentious’—

‘Oh! what it is very spicy, is it? Come hand it over. There’s the two bob.’

‘My poverty and not my will consents,’ sighed the trader.

‘There you be off, or we shall have all the brats coming round us.’

The pedlar complied and moved off, and so willing was he to oblige his customers that on turning the corner he shouldered his pack and ran with great agility down the street till he gained a network of small alleys in which he wriggled and left no trace.

Meantime sunken-eyes had put his tongue to the envelope and drawn out the contents.

‘I’ll go into the light and see what it is all about.’

mephistopheles left alone had hardly given his pipe two sucks ere brutus returned black with rage and spouting oaths like a whale.

‘Why what is the matter?’

‘Matter! Didn’t he sell this to me for a flash story?’

'Why he didn't say so. But certainly he dropped a word about loose books.'

'Of course he did.'

'Well! and ain't they?'

'Ain't they!' cried the other with fury. 'Here you young shaver bring the candle out here. 'Ain't they? No they ain't. ——— and ——— and ——— the ——— ———. Look here!'

mephisto. '“Mend your Ways,” a tract.'

brutus. 'I'll break his head instead.'

mephisto. '“Narrative of Mr. James the Missionary.”'

brutus. 'The cheating undermining rip.'

mephisto. 'And here is another to the same tune.'

brutus. 'Didn't I tell you so. The hypocritical humbugging rascal—'

mephisto. 'Stop a bit. Here is a little one: “Memoirs of a Gentleman's Housekeeper.”'

brutus. 'Oh! is there? I did not see that.'

mephisto. 'You are so hasty. The case mayn't be so black as it looks. The others might be thrown in to make up the parcel. Hold the candle nearer.'

brutus. 'Ay! let us see about the housekeeper.'

The two men read “The Housekeeper” eagerly, but as they read the momentary excitement of hope died out of their faces. Not a sparkle of the ore they sought; all was dross. “The Housekeeper” was one of those who make pickles, not are them, and in a linen apron a yard wide save their master's money from the fangs of cook and footman, not help him scatter it in a satin gown.

There was not even a stray hint or an indelicate expression for the poor fellows’ two shillings. The fraud was complete. It was not like the ground coffee pepper and mustard in a London shop in which there is as often as not a pinch of real coffee mustard and pepper to a pound of chicoree and bullock’s blood, of red-lead dirt flour and turmeric. Here the do was pure.

Then brutus relieved his swelling heart by a string of observations partly rhetorical partly zoological. He devoted to horrible plagues every square inch of the pedlar, enumerating particularly those interior organs that subserve vitality, and concluded by vowing solemnly to put a knife into him the first fair opportunity.

‘I’ll teach the rogue to—’ Sell you medicine for poison eh?

mephistopheles, either because he was a more philosophic spirit or was not the one out of pocket took the blow more coolly.

‘It is a bite and no mistake. But what of it? Our money,’ said he with a touch of sadness, ‘goes as it comes. This is only two bob flung in the dirt. We should not have invested them in the Three per Cents; and to-night’s swag will make it up.’

He then got a fresh wafer and sealed the pamphlets up again.

‘There’ said he ‘you keep dark and sell the first flat you come across the same way the varmint sold you.’

brutus, sickened at heart by the pedlar’s iniquity, revived at the prospect of selling some fellow-creature

as he had been sold. He put the paper trap in his pocket, and cheated of obscenity, consoled himself with brandy such as Bacchus would not own but Beelzebub would brew for man if permitted to keep an earthly distillery.

Presently they were joined by the third man, and for two hours the three heads might all have been covered by one bushel-basket, and pedlar Walker's heartless fraud was forgotten in business of a higher order.

At last mephistopheles gave brutus a signal and they rose to interrupt the potations of the new-comer who was pouring down fire and hot water in rather a reckless way.

'We won't all go together' said mephistopheles. 'You two meet me at Jonathan's ken in an hour.'

As brutus and the new-comer walked along an idea came to brutus. 'Here is a fellow that passes for a sharp. What if I sell him my pamphlets and get a laugh at his expense.'

'Mate' said he 'here is a flash book all sealed up. What will you give me for it?'

'Well! I don't much care for that sort of reading old fellow.'

'But this is cheap. I got it a bargain. Come a shilling won't hurt you for it. See there is more than one under the cover.'

Now the other had been drinking till he was in that state in which a good-natured fellow's mind if decomposed would be found to be all 'Yes' and 'Dine with me to-morrow,' so he fell at once into the trap.

‘I’ll give it you my boy,’ said he. ‘Let us see it? There are more than one inside it. You’re an honest fellow. Owe you a shilling.’ And the sealed parcel went into his pocket. Then seeing brutus look rather rueful at this way of doing business he hiccoughed out ‘Stop your bob out of the swag,’ and chuckled.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A SNOW-WHITE suburban villa standing alone with its satellites that occupied five times as much space as itself; coach-house stables offices green-house clinging to it like dew to a lily, and hot-house farther in the rear. A wall of considerable height enclosed the whole.

It looked as secure and peaceful as innocent in the fleeting light the young moon cast on it every now and then as the passing clouds left her clear a moment.

Yet at this calm thoughtful hour crime was waiting to invade this pretty little place.

Under the scullery-window lurked brutus and mephistopheles—faces blackened tools in hand ready to whip out a pane of said window and so penetrate the kitchen, and from the kitchen the pantry where they made sure of a few spoons, and up the back stairs to the plate-chest. They would be in the house even now but a circumstance delayed them—a light was burning on the second floor. Now it was contrary to their creed to enter a house where a light was burning, above all, if there was the least chance of that light being in a sitting-room. Now they had been some hours watching the house and that light had been

there all the time, therefore argued mephistopheles, ‘It is not a farthing glim in a bed-room or we should have seen it lighted. It is some one up. We must wait till they roost.’

They waited and waited and waited. Still the light burned.

They cursed the light.

No wonder. Light seems the natural enemy of evil deeds.

They began to get bitter, and their bodies cold.

Even burglary becomes a bore when you have to wait too long idle out in the cold.

At last at about half-past two the light went out: then keenly listening the two sons of darkness heard a movement in the house, and more than one door open and shut, and then the sound of feet going rapidly down the road towards Sydney.

‘Why! it is a party only just broke up. Lucky I would not work till the glim was out.’

‘But I say Bill, he is at that corner, the nobs must have passed close to him, suppose they saw him.’

‘He is not so green as let them see him.’

The next question was how long they should wait to let the inmates close their peepers.

All had been still and dark more than half an hour when the pair began to work. mephisto took out a large piece of putty and dabbed it on the middle of the pane; this putty he worked in the centre up to a pyramid; this he held with his left hand, while with his right he took out his glazier’s diamond and cut the pane

all round the edges. By the hold the putty gave him, he prevented the pane from falling inside the house and making a noise, and finally whipped it out clean and handed it to brutus. A moment more the two men were in the scullery, thence into the kitchen through a door which they found open; in the kitchen were two doors, trying one they found it open into a larder. Here casting the light of his dark lantern round, brutus discovered some cold fowl and a ham; they took these into the kitchen, and somewhat coolly took out their knives and ate a hasty but hearty supper. Their way of hacking the ham was as lawless as all the rest. They then took off their shoes and dropped them outside the scullery window, and now the serious part of the game began. Creeping like cats, they reached the pantry, and sure enough found more than a dozen silver spoons and forks of different sizes that had been recently used. These they put into a small bag, and mephisto went back through the scullery into the back garden and hid these spoons in a bush—'Then if we should be interrupted we can come back for them.'

And now the game became more serious and more nervous, the pair drew their clasp knives and placed them in their bosoms ready in case of extremity; then creeping like cats, one foot at a time and then a pause, ascended the back stairs, at the top of which was a door. But this door was not fastened, and in another moment they passed through it and were on the first landing. The plan correct in every particular, indicated the plate closet to their right, a gleam from the lantern showed

it ; the key-hole was old fashioned as also described, and in a moment brutus had it open. Then mephisto whipped out a green baize bag with compartments, and in a minute these adroit hands had stowed away cups, tureens, baskets, soup-spoons, &c. to the value of three hundred pounds, and scarce a chink heard during the whole operation. It was done ; a look passed as much as to say this is enough, and they crept back silent and cat-like as they had come, brutus leading with the bag. Now just as he had his hand on the door through which they had come up—snick ! click !—a door was locked somewhere down below.

brutus looked round and put the bag gently down.

‘Where !’ he whispered.

‘Near the kitchen’ was the reply scarce audible.

‘Sounded to me to come from the hall’ whispered the other.

Both men changed colour, but retained their presence of mind and their cunning. brutus stepped back to the plate-closet, put the bag in it, and closed it, but without locking it.

‘Stay there, whispered he, ‘and if I whistle run out the back way empty handed. If I mew out with the bag and come out by the front door ; nothing but inside bolts to it plan says.’

They listened a moment, there was no fresh sound. Then brutus slipped down the front stairs in no time ; he found the front door not bolted ; he did not quite understand that, and drawing a short bludgeon, he opened it very cautiously ; the caution was not superfluous, two

gentlemen made a dash at him from the outside the moment the door was open ; one of their heads cracked like a broken bottle under the blow the ready ruffian struck him with his bludgeon, and he dropped like a shot ; but another was coming flying across the lawn with a drawn cutlass, and brutus finding himself over-matched, gave one loud whistle and flew across the hall, making for the kitchen. Flew he never so fast mephisto was there an instant before him. As for the gentleman at the door he was encumbered with his hurt companion, who fell across his knees as he rushed at the burglar. brutus got a start of some seconds and dashed furiously into the kitchen, and flew to the only door between them and scullery-window. THE DOOR WAS LOCKED.

The burglar's eyes gleamed in their deep caverns, ' Back Will and cut through them ' he cried, and out flashed his long bright knife.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHILE the two burglars were near the scullery window watching the light in the upper story a third man stood sentinel on the opposite side of the house ; he was but a few yards from the public road, yet hundreds would have passed and no man seen him for he had placed himself in a thick shadow flat against the garden wall. His office was to signal danger from his side should any come. Now the light that kept his comrades inactive was not on his side of the house ; he waited therefore expecting every moment their signal that the job was done. On this the cue was to slip quietly off, and all make by different paths for the low public-house described above, and there divide the swag.

The man waited and waited and waited for this signal ; it never came ; we know why. Then he became impatient, miserable ; he was out of his element, wanted to be doing something. At last all this was an intolerable bore. Not feeling warm towards the job he had given the active business to his comrades, which he now regretted for two reasons : first, he was kept here stagnant and bored ; and second, they must be a pair of

bunglers; he'd have robbed a parish in less time. He would light a cigar. Tobacco blunts all ills, even ennui. Putting his hand in his pocket for a cigar, it ran against a hard square substance. What is this, oh! the book mephisto had sold him; no he would not smoke, he would see what the book was all about; he knelt down and took off his hat, and put his dark lantern inside it before he ventured to move the slide; then undid the paper, and putting it into the hat, threw the concentrated rays on the contents, and peered in to examine them. Now the various little pamphlets had been displaced by mephisto, and the first words that met the thief's eye in large letters on the back of a tract were these, "THE WAGES OF SIN ARE DEATH."

Thomas Robinson looked at these words with a stupid gaze. At first he did not realize all that lay in them. He did not open the tract; he gazed benumbed at the words, and they glared at him like the eyes of green fire when we come in the dark on some tiger-cat crouching in his lair.

Oh that I were a painter and could make you see what cannot be described—the features of this strange incident that sounds so small and was so great! The black night, the hat, the renegade peering under it in the wall's deep shadows to read something trashy, and the half-open lantern shooting its little strip of intense fire, and the grim words springing out in a moment from the dark face of night and dazzling the renegade's eyes and chilling his heart:

"THE WAGES OF SIN ARE DEATH."

To his stupor now succeeded surprise and awe. ‘How comes this!’ he whispered aloud, ‘was this a trick of ——’s? No! he doesn’t know—This is the devil’s own doing—no! it is not—more likely it is—

‘The third time!—

‘I’ll read it; my hands shake so I can hardly hold it. It is by him—yes—signed F. E. Heaven have mercy on me!—This is more than natural.’

He read it, shaking all over as he read. The tract was simply written. It began with a story of instances, some of them drawn from the histories of prisoners, and it ended with an earnest exhortation and a terrible warning. When the renegade came to this part, his heart beat violently, for along with the earnest straightforward unmincing words of sacred fire there seemed to rise from the paper the eloquent voice, the eye rich with love, the face of inexhaustible intelligence and sympathy that had so often shone on Robinson, while just words such as these issued from those golden lips.

He read on, but not to the end; for as he read he came to one paragraph that made him fancy Mr. Eden was by his very side.

“You into whose hands these words of truth shall fall, and find you intending to do some foolish or wicked thing to-morrow, or the next day, or to-day, or this very hour, stop!—do not that sin! on your soul do it not!—fall on your knees and repent the sin you have meditated; better repent the base design than suffer for the sin, as suffer you shall so surely as the

sky is pure, so surely as God is holy and sin's wages are death."

At these words, as if the priest's hand had been stretched across the earth and sea and laid on the thief's head, he fell down upon his knees with his back towards the scene of burglary and his face towards England crying out 'I will, your reverence. I am!—Lord help me!' cried he, then first remembering how he had been told to pray in temptation's hour. The next moment he started to his feet, he dashed his lantern to the ground, and leaped over a gate that stood in his way, and fled down the road to Sydney.

He ran full half a mile before he stopped; his mind was in a whirl. Another reflection stopped him: he was a sentinel, and had betrayed his post; suppose his pals were to get into trouble through reckoning on him; was it fair to desert them without warning? What if he were to go back and give the whistle of alarm, pretend he had seen some one watching, and so prevent the meditated crime, as well as be guiltless of it himself; but then, thought he, 'and suppose I do go back what will become of me?'

While he hesitated, the question was decided for him. As he looked back irresolute, his keen eye noticed a shadow moving along the hedge-side to his left.

'Why, they are coming away' was his first thought: but looking keenly down the other edge which was darker still he saw another noiseless moving shadow.

'Why are they on different sides of the road and both keeping in the shadow?' thought this shrewd

spirit, and he liked it so ill that he turned at once and ran off towards Sydney.

At this out came the two figures with a bound into the middle of the road, and with a loud view-halloo, raced after him like the wind.

Robinson as he started and before he knew the speed of his pursuers ventured to run sideways a moment to see who or what they were. He caught a glimpse of white waistcoats and glittering studs, and guessed the rest.

He had a start of not more than twenty yards, but he was a good runner, and it was in his favour that his pursuers had come up at a certain speed, while he started fresh after a rest. He squared his shoulders, opened his mouth wide for a long race, and ran as men run for their lives.

In the silent night Robinson's highlows might have been heard half a mile off, clattering along the hard road. Pit pit pit pat! came two pair of dress-boots after him. Robinson heard the sound with a thrill of fear; ‘They in their pumps and I in boots’ thought he, and his pursuers heard the hunted one groan and redoubled their efforts as dogs when the stag begins to sob.

He had scarce run a hundred yards with his ears laid back like a hare's, when he could not help thinking the horrible pit pit pit got nearer; he listened with agonized keenness as he ran, and so fine did his danger make his ear that he could tell the exact position of his pursuers. A cold sweat crept over him as

he felt they had both gained ten yards out of the twenty on him; then he distinctly felt one pursuer gain upon the other, and this one's pit pit pit crept nearer and nearer, an inch every three or four yards; the other held his own—no more—no less.

At last so near crept No. 1, that Robinson felt his hot breath at his ear. He clenched his teeth and gave a desperate spurt, and put four or five yards between them; he could have measured the ground gained, by the pit pit pat. But the pursuer put on a spurt, and reduced the distance by half.

'I may as well give in,' thought the hunted one—but at that moment came a gleam of hope; this pursuer began suddenly to pant very loud. He had clenched his teeth to gain the twenty yards; he had gained them but had lost his wind. Robinson heard this, and feared him no longer, and in fact after one or two more puffs came one despairing snort, and No. 1 pulled up dead short, thoroughly blown.

As No. 2 passed him, he just panted out—

'Won't catch him.'

'Won't I!' ejaculated No. 2, expelling the words rather than uttering them.

Klopetee klop, klopetee klop, klopetee, klopetee, klopetee klop.

Pit pat, pit pat, pit pat pat, pit pit pat. Ten yards apart, no more no less.

Nor nearer might the dog attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.

of recovering the ground now lost, he gave a rueful sort

‘They have done me between them,’ thought poor Robinson. ‘I could have run from either singly, but one blows me, and then the other runs me down. I can get out of it by fighting perhaps, but then there will be another crime.’

Robinson now began to pant audibly, and finding he could not shake this hunter off, he with some reluctance prepared another game.

He began to exaggerate his symptoms of distress, and imperceptibly to relax his pace. On this the pursuer came up hand over head. He was scarce four yards behind, when Robinson suddenly turned and threw himself on one knee, with both hands out like a cat’s claws. The man ran on full tilt; in fact, he could not have stopped. Robinson caught his nearest ancle with both hands, and rose with him, and lifted him aided by his own impulse high into the air and sent his heels up perpendicular. The man described a parabola in the air, and came down on the very top of his head with frightful force; and as he lay his head buried in his hat and his heels kicking, Robinson without a moment lost jumped over his body, and klopettee klop rang fainter and fainter down the road alone.

The plucky pursuer wrenched his head with infinite difficulty out of his hat, which sat on his shoulders with his nose pointing through a chasm from crown to brim, shook himself, and ran wildly a few yards in pursuit, but finding he had in his confusion run away from Robinson, as well as Robinson from him, and hopeless

of laugh, made the best of it, put his hands in his pockets, and strolled back to meet No. 1.

Meantime Robinson fearful of being pursued on horseback relaxed his speed but little and ran the three miles out into Sydney. He came home with his flank beating and a glutinous moisture on his lip and a hunted look in his eye. He crept into bed, but spent the night thinking, ay and praying too, not sleeping.

CHAPTER XXX.

THOMAS ROBINSON rose from his sleepless bed an altered man; altered above all in this that his self-confidence was clean gone. 'How little I knew myself' said he, 'and how well his reverence knew me! I am the weakest fool on earth—he saw that and told me what to do. He provided help for me and I, like an ungrateful idiot, never once thought of obeying him; but from this hour I see myself as I am and as he used to call me—a clever fool. I can't walk straight without some honest man to hold by. Well, I'll have one though I give up everything else in the world for it.'

Then he went to his little box and took out the letter to George Fielding. He looked at it and reproached himself for forgetting it so long. 'A letter from the poor fellow's sweetheart too. I ought to have sent it by the post if I did not take it. But I will take it. I'll ask Mr. Miles's leave the moment he comes home and start that very day.' Then he sat down and read the tract again, and as he read it was filled with shame and contrition.

By one of those freaks of mind which it is so hard to account for every good feeling rushed upon him with far greater power than when he was in—prison, and strange to say he now loved his reverence more and took his words deeper to heart than he had done when they were together. His flesh crept with horror at the thought that he had been a criminal again at least in intention, and that but for heaven's mercy he would have been taken and punished with frightful severity, and above all would have wounded his reverence to the heart in return for more than mortal kindness goodness and love. And to do Robinson justice this last thought made his heart sicken and his flesh creep more than all the rest. He was like a man who had fallen asleep on the brink of an unseen precipice, awoke, and looked down.

The penitent man said his prayers this morning and vowed on his knees humility and a new life. Henceforth he would know himself; he would not attempt to guide himself; he would just obey his reverence; and to begin, whenever a temptation came in sight he would pray against it then and there and fly from it, and the moment his master returned he would leave the town and get away to honest George Fielding with his passport—Susan's letter.

With these prayers and these resolutions a calm complacency stole over him; he put his reverence's tract and George's letter in his bosom and came down into the kitchen.

The first person he met was the housemaid Jenny.

‘Oh, here is my lord!’ cried she. ‘Where were you last night?’

Robinson stammered out, ‘Nowhere in particular. Why?’

‘Oh, because the master was asking for you, and you weren’t to be found high or low.’

‘What, is he come home?’

‘Came home last night.’

‘I’ll go and take him his hot water.’

‘Why he is not in the house stupid. He dressed the moment he came home and went out to a party. He swore properly at your not being in the way to help him dress.’

‘What did he say?’ asked Robinson a little uneasy.

The girl’s eyes twinkled. He said, ‘How ever am I to lace myself now that scamp is not in the way?’

‘Come, none of your chaff, Jenny.’

‘Why you know you do lace him, and pretty tight too.’

‘I do nothing of the kind.’

‘Oh, of course you won’t tell on one another. Tell me our head scamp does not wear stays! A man would not be as broad-shouldered as that and have a waist like a wasp and his back like a board without a little lacing, and a good deal too.’

‘Well, have it your own way Jenny. Won’t you give me a morsel of breakfast?’

‘Well, Tom, I can give you some just for form’s sake; but bless you you won’t be able to eat it.’

‘Why not?’

'Gents that are out all night bring a headache home in the morning in place of an appetite.'

'But I was not out all night. I was at home soon after twelve.'

'Really?'

'Really!'

'Tom!'

'Well Jane!'

'Those that ain't clever enough to hide secrets should trust them to those that are.'

'I don't know what you mean my lass.'

'Oh nothing; only I sat up till half-past one in the kitchen and I listened till three in my room.'

'You took a deal of trouble on my account.'

'Oh, it was more curiosity than regard,' was the keen reply.

'So I should say.'

The girl coloured and seemed nettled by this answer. She set demurely about the work of small vengeance. 'Now,' said she with great cordiality, 'you tell me what you were doing all night and why you broke into the house like a—a—hem! instead of coming into it like a man, and then you'll save me the trouble of finding it out whether you like or not.'

These words chilled Robinson. What! had a spy been watching him—perhaps for days—and above all a female spy a thing with a velvet paw a noiseless step an inscrutable countenance and a microscopic eye.

He hung his head over his cup in silence. Jenny's eye was scanning him. He felt that without seeing it.

He was uneasy under it, but his self-reproach was greater than his uneasiness.

At this juncture the street door was opened with a latch-key.

‘Here comes the head scamp’ said Jenny with her eye on Robinson.

The next moment a bell was rung sharply. Robinson rose.

‘Finish your breakfast’ said Jenny, ‘I’ll answer the bell,’ and out she went. She returned in about ten minutes with a dressing-gown over her arm and a pair of curling-irons in her hand.

‘There’ said she ‘you are to go in the parlour, and get up the young buck; curl his nob and whiskers. I wish it was me, I’d curl his ear the first thing I’d curl.’

‘What Jane, did you take the trouble to bring them down for me?’

‘They look like it’ replied the other tartly as if she repented the good office.

Robinson went in to his master. He expected a rebuke for being out of the way; but no! he found the young gentleman in excellent humour and high spirits.

‘Help me off this coat Tom.’

‘Yes sir.’

‘Oh! not so rough, confound you. Ah! Ugh!’

‘Coat’s a little too tight sir.’

‘No it isn’t, it fits me like a glove; but I am stiff and sore. There now get me a shirt.’

Robinson came back with the shirt, and aired it close

to the fire; and this being a favourable position for saying what he felt awkward about, he began.

'Mr. Miles, sir.'

'Hallo!'

'I am going to ask you a favour.'

'Out with it!'

'You have been a kind master to me.'

'I should think I have too. By Jove you won't find such another in a hurry.'

'No sir, I am sure I should not, but there is an opening for me of a different sort altogether. I have a friend, a squatter, near Bathurst, and I am to join him if you will be so kind as to let me go.'

'What an infernal nuisance!' cried the young gentleman, who was like most boys good-natured and selfish. 'The moment I get a servant I like he wants to go to the devil.'

'Only to Bathurst sir' said Robinson deprecatingly to put him in a good humour.

'And what am I to do for another?'

At this moment in came Jenny with all the paraphernalia of breakfast.

'Here Jenny' cried he, 'here's Robinson wants to leave us. Stupid ass!'

Jenny stood transfixed with the tray in her hand.

'Since when?' asked she of her master but looking at Robinson.

'This moment. The faithful creature greeted my return with that proposal.'

‘Well sir, a servant isn’t a slave and I suppose he has a reason?’

‘Oh! they have always got a reason, such as it is. Wants to go and squat at Bathurst. Well Tom you are a fool for leaving us, but of course we shan’t pay you the compliment of keeping you against your will, shall we?’ looking at Jane.

‘What have I to do with it?’ replied she opening her grey eyes. ‘What is it to me whether he goes or stays?’

‘Come I like that. Why you are the housemaid and he is the footman, and these two we know are always’—and the young gentleman eked out his meaning by whistling a tune.

‘Mr. Miles,’ said Jenny very gravely, like an elder rebuking a younger, ‘you must excuse me sir, but I advise you not to make so free with your servants. Servants are encroaching, and they will be sure to take liberties with you in turn;’ and turning suddenly red and angry, ‘if you talk like that to me I shall leave the room.’

‘Well, if you must! you must! but bring the tea-kettle back with you. That is a duck!’

Jenny could not help laughing, and went for the tea-kettle.

On her return Robinson made signals to her over the master’s head, which he had begun to frizz. At first she looked puzzled, but following the direction of his eye she saw that her master’s right hand was terribly cut and swollen.

‘Oh!’ cried the girl. ‘Oh dear! Oh dear!’

‘Eh?’ cried Mr. Miles, ‘what is the row?’

'Look at your poor hand sir!'

'Oh, ay! isn't it hideous. Met with an accident. Soon get well.'

'No it won't, not of itself; but I have got a capital lotion for bruises, and I shall bathe it for you.'

Jenny brought in a large basin of warm water, and began to foment it first, touching it so tenderly.

'And his hand that was as white as a lady's,' said Jenny pitifully, 'po-o-r bo-y!'

This kind expression had no sooner escaped her than she coloured and bent her head down over her work, hoping it might escape notice.

'Young woman' said Mr. Miles with paternal gravity 'servants are advised not to make too free with their masters; or the beggars will forget their place and take liberties with you. He! He! He!'

Jenny put his hand quietly down into the water, and got up and ran across the room for the door. Her course was arrested by a howl from the jocose youth.

'Murder! Take him off, Jenny; kick him; the beggar is curling and laughing at the same time. Confound you, can't you lay the irons down when I say a good thing. Ha! Ha! Ha!'

This strange trio chuckled a space. Miles the loudest.

'Tom pour out my tea; and you, Jenny, if you will come to the scratch again ha! ha!—I'll tell you how I came by this.'

This promise brought the inquisitive Jenny to the basin directly.

'You know Hazeltine?

‘Yes, sir, a tall gentleman that comes here now and then.

‘That is the one you are to run a race with on the public course,’ put in Jenny looking up with a scandalized air.

‘That is the boy; but how the deuce did you know?’

‘Gentlemen to run with all the dirty boys looking on like horses’ remonstrated the grammatical one, ‘it is a disgrace.’

‘So it is for the one that is beat. Well I was to meet Hazeltine to supper out of town. By-the-by, you don’t know Tom Yates?’

‘Oh’ said Jenny ‘I have heard of him too.’

‘I doubt that, there are a good many of his name.’

‘The rake I mean lives a mile or two out of Sydney.’

‘So do half-a-dozen more of them.’

‘This one is about the biggest gambler and sharper unhung.’

‘All right! that is my friend! Well he gave us a thundering supper—lots of lush.’

‘What is lush?’

‘Tea and coffee and barley-water my dear. Oh! can’t you put the thundering irons down when I say a good thing? Well I mustn’t be witty any more, the penalty is too severe.’

I need hardly say it was not Mr. Miles’s jokes that agitated Robinson now; on the contrary in the midst of his curiosity and rising agitation these jokes seemed ghastly impossibilities.

‘Well at ten o’clock we went up stairs to a snug little room, and all four sat down to a nice little green table.’

'To gamble!'

'No! to whist; but now comes the fun. We had been playing about four hours, and the room was hot, and Yates was gone for a fresh pack, and old Hazeltine was gone into the drawing-room to cool himself. Presently he comes back and he says in a whisper, "Come here old fellows." We went with him to the drawing-room, and at first sight we saw nothing, but presently flash came a light right in our eyes; it seemed to come from something glittering in the field. And these flashes kept coming and going. At last we got the governor, and he puzzled over it a little while. "I know what it is" cried he "it is my cucumber glass."

Jenny looked up. 'Glass might glitter,' said she, "but I don't see how it could flash.'

'No more did we, and we laughed in the governor's face; for all that we were wrong.

"There is somebody under that wall with a dark lantern," said Tom Yates, "and every now and then the glass catches the glare and reflects it this way."

"Solomon!" cried the rest of us.

'The fact is Jenny, when Tom Yates gets half drunk he develops sagacity more than human. (Robinson gave a little groan). Aha' cried Miles 'the beggar has burnt his finger. I'm glad of it. Why should I be the only sufferer by his thundering irons?

"Here is a lark," said I, "we'll nab this dark lantern—won't we, Hazy?"

"Rather" said Hazy.

"Wait till I get my pistols, and I'll give you a cut-

lass, George,” says Tom Yates. I forget who his friend was ; but he said he was of noble blood, and I think myself he was some relation to the King-of-trumps, the whole family came about him so, mind my hair now.

‘ “Oh, bother your artillery,” said I. “Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.” When I’m a little cut you may know it by my quoting Shakespeare. When I’m sober I don’t remember a word of him—and don’t want to.’

‘No the Sporting Magazine that is your Bible sir,’ suggested Jenny.

‘Yes, and let me read it without your commentary—mind my hair now. Where was I? Oh. Hazeltine and I opened the door softly, and whipped out, but the beggar was too sharp for us. No doubt he heard the door. Anyway before we could get through the shrubbery he was off, and we heard him clattering down the road ever so far off. However we followed quietly on the grass by the road-side at a fair travelling pace, and by-and-by what do you think? Our man had pulled up in the middle of the road and stood stock still.

“That is a green trick,” thought I. However, before we could get up to him he saw us or heard us, and off down the road no end of a pace.

“Tally ho!” cried I. Out came Hazy from the other hedge, and away we went—“Pug” a-head, “Growler” and “Gay-lad” scarce twenty yards from his brush, and the devil take the hindmost. Well of course we made sure of catching him in about a hundred yards—two such runners as Hazy and me—’

‘And did not you?’

'I'll tell you. At first we certainly gained on him a few yards, but after that I could not near him. But Hazy put on a tremendous spurt, and left me behind for all I could do. "Here is a go" thought I, "and I have backed myself for a hundred pounds in a half-mile race against this beggar." Well, I was behind, but Hazy and the fox seemed to me to be joined together running, when all of a sudden—pouff! Hazy's wind and his pluck blew out together. He tailed off. Wasn't I pleased! "Good-bye Hazy," says I, as I shot by him and took up the running. Well, I tried all I knew; but this confounded fellow ran me within half-a-mile of Sydney, (N.B. within two miles of it). My throat and all my inside was like an oven, and I was thinking of tailing off too, when I heard the beggar puff and blow, so then I knew I must come up with him before long.'

'And did you sir?' asked Jenny in great excitement.

'Yes,' said the other 'I passed him even.'

'But did you catch him?'

'Well! why—yes, I caught him as the Chinese caught the Tartar. This was one of your downy coves that are up to every move. When he found he hadn't legs to run from me he slips back to meet me. Down he goes under my leg—I go blundering over him twenty miles an hour. He lifts me clear over his head and I come flying down from the clouds heel over tip. I'd give twenty pounds to know how it was done, and fifty to see it done—to a friend. All I know is that I should have knocked my own brains out if it had not

been for my hat and my hand—they bore the brunt between them as you see.’

‘And what became of the poor man?’ asked Jane.

‘Well, when the poor man had flung me over his head he ran on faster than ever, and by the time I had shaken my knowledge-box and found out north from south, I heard the poor man’s nailed shoes clattering down the road. To start again a hundred yards behind a poor man who could run like that would have been making a toil of a trouble, so I trotted back to meet Hazy.’

‘Well, I am glad he got off clear ain’t you Tom?’

‘Yes—no. A scoundrel that hashed the master like this—why Jane, you must be mad!’

‘Spare your virtuous indignation’ said the other coolly. ‘Remember I had been hunting him like a wild beast till his heart was nearly broke, and when I was down he could easily have revenged himself by giving me a kick with his heavy shoes on the head or the loins that would have spoiled my running for a month of Sundays. What do you say to that?’

Robinson coloured. ‘I say you are very good to make excuses for an unfortunate man—for a rascal—that is to say a burglar; a—’

‘And how do you know he was all that?’ said Jenny very sharply.

‘Why did he run if he was not guilty?’ inquired Robinson cunningly.

‘Guilty—what of?’ asked Jenny.

‘That is more than I can tell you,’ replied Robinson.

'I dare say said Jenny 'it was some peaceable man that took fright at seeing two wild young gentlemen come out like mad bulls after him.'

'When I have told you my story you will be better able to judge his character.'

'What, isn't the story ended?'

'Ended? The cream of it is coming.'

'Oh sir,' cried Jenny, 'please don't go on till I come back. I am going for the cold lotion now; I have fomented it enough.'

'Well, look sharp then, here is the other all in a twitter with excitement.'

'Me, sir? No—yes. I am naturally interested.'

'Well, you haven't been long. I don't think I want any lotion, the hot water has done it a great deal of good.'

'This will do it more.'

'But do you know it is rather a bore to have only one hand to cut bread and butter with?'

'I'll cut it sir,' said Robinson laying down his irons for a moment.

'How long shall you be Jenny?' asked Mr. Miles.

'I shall have done by when your story is done' said she coolly.

Mr. Miles laughed. 'Well, Jenny' said he, 'I hadn't walked far before I met Hazeltine.

'“Have you got him?” says he.

'“Do I look like it?” said I rather crustily.

'Fancy a fool asking me whether I had got him! So I told him all about it, and we walked back together.

By-and-by we met the other two just outside the gate. Well, just as we were going in Tom Yates said, “I say, suppose we look round the premises before we go to bed.”

‘We went softly round the house and what did we find out but a window with the glass taken out; we poked about and we found a pair of shoes.

“‘Why there’s some one in the house” says Tom Yates ‘as I’m a sinner.”

‘So we held a council of war. Tom was to go into the kitchen, lock the door leading out, and ambush in the larder with his pistols; and we three were to go in by the front door and search the house. Well Hazeltine and I had got within a yard or two of it, and the knave of trumps in the rear with a sword or something, when by George sir the door began to open, and out slips a fellow quietly. Long Hazy and I went at him, Hazy first. Crack he caught Hazy on the head with a bludgeon, down went daddy-long-legs, and I got entangled in him, and the robber cut like the wind for the kitchen. “Come on,” shouted I to the honourable thingumbob, bother his name—there—the knave of trumps, and I pulled up Hazy but couldn’t wait for him, and after the beggar like mad. Well as I came near the kitchen-door I heard a small scrimmage and back comes my man flying bludgeon in one hand and knife in the other both whirling over his head like a windmill. I kept cool, doubled my right, and put in a heavy one from the armpit you know Tom; caught him just under the chin, you might have heard his jaw crack a mile off;

down goes my man on his back flat on the bricks, and his bludgeon rattled one way and his knife the other—such a lark. Oh! oh! oh! what are you doing Robinson you hurt me most confoundedly—I won't tell you any more. So now he was down, in popt the knave of swords and fell on him, and Hazy came staggering in after and insulted him a bit and we bagged him.'

'And the other sir' asked Tom, affecting an indifferent tone 'he didn't get off I hope?'

'What other?' inquired Jenny.

'The other unfor—the other rascal—the burglar.'

'Why he never said there were two.'

'Y—yes!—he said he found their shoes.'

'No, he said he found a pair of shoes.'

'For all that you are wrong, Jenny, and he is right—there were two; and what is more Tom Yates had got the other threatening to blow out his brains if he moved, so down he sat on the dresser and took it quite easy and whistled a tune while we trussed the other beggar with his own bludgeon and our chokers. Tom Yates says the cool one tumbled down from up stairs just as we drove our one in. Tom let them try the door before he bounced out; then my one flung a chair at Tom's head and cut back, Tom nailed the other and I floored mine Hurrah!'

Through this whole narrative Robinson had coolly and delicately to curl live hair with a beating heart, and to curl the very man who was relating all the time how he had hunted him and caught his comrades.

Meantime a shrewd woman there listening with all her ears, a woman too who had certain vague suspicions about him, and had taken him up rather sharper than natural he thought when being off his guard for a moment he anticipated the narrator, and assumed there were two burglars in the house.

Tom therefore though curious and anxious shut his face and got on his guard, and it was with an admirable imitation of mere sociable curiosity that he inquired, ‘And what did the rascals say for themselves?’

‘What could they say’ said Jenny ‘they were caught in the fact.’

‘To do them justice they did not speak of themselves, but they said three or four words too—very much to the point.’

‘How interesting it is!’ cried Jenny, ‘what about—?’

‘Well! it was about your friend.’

‘My friend?’

‘The peaceable gentleman the two young ruffians had chased down the road,’

‘Oh! he was one of them’ said Jane, ‘that is plain enough now in course. What did they say about him?’

‘“Sold!” says my one to Tom’s.

“And no mistake” says Tom’s. Oh! they spoke out, took no more notice of us four than if we had no ears.

‘Then says mine. “What do you think of *your* pal now?” and what do you think Tom’s answered, Jenny?—it was rather a curious answer—multum in

parvo as we say at school, and one that makes me fear there is a storm brewing for our mutual friend, the peaceable gentleman Jenny—alias the downy runner.'

'Why what did he say?'

'He said, "I think—he won't be alive this day week!"'

'The wretches!'

'No! you don't see—they thought he had betrayed them.'

'But of course you undeceived them sir,' said Robinson.

'No! I didn't. Why you precious greenhorn was that our game?'

'Well sir,' cried Robinson cheerfully, 'any way it was a good night's work. The only thing vexes me' added he, with an intense air of mortification 'is that the worst scoundrel of the lot got clear off; that is a pity—a downright pity.'

'Make your mind easy' replied Mr. Miles, calmly, 'he won't escape; we shall have him before the day is out.'

'Will you, sir? that is right—but how?'

'The honourable thingumbob, Tom Yates's friend, put us up to it. We sent the pair down to Sydney in the break and we put Yates's groom (he is a ticket-of-leave) in with them, and a bottle of brandy, and he is to condole with them and have a guinea if they let out the third man's name, and they will for they are bitter against him.'

Robinson sighed.

‘What is the matter’ said his master trying to twist his head round.

‘Nothing! only I am afraid they—they won’t split; fellows of that sort don’t split on a comrade where they can get no good by it.’

‘Well if they don’t still we shall have him. One of us saw his face.’

‘Ah!’

‘It was the honourable—the knave of trumps. Whilst Yates was getting the arms, Trumps slipped out by the garden gate and caught a glimpse of our friend; he saw him take the lantern up and fling it down and run. The light fell full on his face and he could swear to it out of a thousand. So the net is round our friend and we shall have him before the day is out.’

‘Dring-a-dong dring’ (a ring at the bell).

‘Have you done Tom?’

‘Just one turn more, sir.’

‘Then Jenny you see who that is?’

Jenny went and returned with an embossed card, ‘It is a young gentleman, moustache and lavender gloves; oh such a buck.’

‘Who can it be? the “Honourable George Lascelles?” why that is the very man. I remember he said he would do himself the honour to call on me. That is the knave of trumps; go down directly Robinson and tell him I’m at home and bring him up.’

‘Yes sir!’

‘Yes sir! Well then why don’t you go?’

'Um! perhaps Jenny will go while I clear these things away;' and without waiting for an answer Robinson hastened to encumber himself with the tea-tray and flung the loaf and curling-irons into it, and bustled about and showed a sudden zeal lest this bachelor's room should appear in disorder; and as Jenny mounted the front stairs followed by the sprig of nobility, he plunged heavily laden down the back stairs into the kitchen and off with his coat and cleaned knives like a mad thing.

'Oh! if I had but a pound in my pocket,' thought he 'I would not stay another hour in Sydney. I'd get my ring and run for Bathurst and never look behind me. How comfortable and happy I was until I fell back into the old courses, and now see what a life mine has been ever since! What a twelve hours! hunted like a wild beast, suspected and watched by my fellow-servant, and forced to hide my thoughts from this one and my face from that one; but I deserve it and I wish it was ten times as bad. Oh! you fool you idiot you brute it is not the half of what you deserve. I ask but one thing of heaven—that his reverence may never know; don't let me break that good man's heart; I'd much rather die before the day is out.'

At this moment Jenny came in. Robinson cleaned the poor knives harder still and did not speak; his cue was to find out what was passing in the girl's mind. But she washed her cup and saucer and plates in silence. Presently the bell rang.

‘Tom!’ said Jenny quietly.

‘Would you mind going Jenny?’

‘Me! it is not my business.’

‘No, Jenny! but once in a way if you will be so kind.’

‘Once! why I have been twice to the door for you to-day. You to your place and I to mine. Shan’t go!’

‘Look at me with my coat off and covered with brickdust.’

‘Put your coat on and shake the dust off.’

‘Oh Jenny! that is not like you to refuse me such a trifle. I would not disoblige you so.’

‘I didn’t refuse’ said Jenny [making for the door; ‘I only said “no” once or twice, we don’t call that refusing;’ but as she went out of the door she turned sharp as if to catch Robinson’s face off its guard; and her grey eye dwelt on him with one of those demure inexplicable looks her sex can give all ab extra—seeing all revealing nothing.

She returned with her face on fire: ‘That is what I get for taking your place!’

‘What is the matter?’

‘That impudent young villain wanted to kiss me.’

‘Oh! is that all?’

‘No! it is not all; he said I was the prettiest girl in Sydney’ (with an appearance of rising indignation).

‘Well! but Jenny that is no news, I could have told him that.’

‘Then why did you never tell me?’

‘I thought by your manner—you knew it.’

Having tried to propitiate the foe thus Robinson lost no more time, but went upstairs and asked Mr. Miles for the trifle due to him as wages. Mr. Miles was very sorry but he had been cleaned out at his friend Yates's had not a shilling left and no hopes of any for a fortnight to come.

'Then sir' said Robinson doggedly 'I hope you will allow me to go into the town and try and make a little for myself, just enough to pay my travelling expenses.'

'By all means' was the reply; 'tell me if you succeed and I'll borrow a sovereign of you.'

Out went Robinson into the town of Sydney. He got into a respectable street, and knocked at a good house with a green door. He introduced himself to the owner as a first-rate painter and engrainer, and offered to turn this door into a mahogany, walnut, oak, or what not door.

'The house is beautiful all but the door' said sly Tom; 'it is blistered.'

'I am quite content with it as it is' was the reply in a rude supercilious tone.

Robinson went away discomfited; he went doggedly down the street begging them all to have their doors beautified, and wincing at every refusal. At last he found a shopkeeper who had no objection but doubted Robinson's capacity.

'Show me what you can do' said he slyly 'and then I'll talk to you.'

'Send for the materials' replied the artist 'and give

me a board and I’ll put half a dozen woods on the face of it.’

‘And pray’ said the man ‘why should I lay out my money in advertising you? No! you bring me a specimen and if it is all right I’ll give you the job.’

‘That is a bargain’ replied Robinson and went off. ‘How hard they make honesty to a poor fellow’ muttered he bitterly, ‘but I’ll beat them,’ and he clenched his teeth.

He went to a pawnbroker and pawned the hat off his head—it was a new one; then for a halfpenny he bought a sheet of brown paper and twisted it into a workman’s cap; he bought the brushes and a little paint and a little varnish, and then he was without a penny again. He went to a wheelwright’s and begged the loan of a small valueless worm-eaten board he saw kicking about, telling him what it was for. The wealthy wheelwright eyed him with scorn.

‘Should I ever see it again?’ asked he ironically.

‘Keep it for your coffin’ said Robinson fiercely, and passed on.

‘How hard they make honesty to a poor fellow! I was a fool for asking for it when I might have taken it. What was there to hinder me? Honesty my lass you are bitter.’

Presently he came to the suburbs and there was a small wooden cottage. The owner a common labourer was repairing it as well as he could. Robinson asked him very timidly if he could spare a couple of square feet off a board he was sawing.

'What for?'

Robinson showed his paint pot and brushes and told him how he was at a stand-still for want of a board.

'It is only a loan of it I ask' said he.

The man measured the plank carefully, and after some hesitation cut off a good piece.

'I can spare that much' said he 'poor folk' should feel for one another.'

'I'll bring it back you may depend' said Robinson.

'You needn't trouble' said the labouring man with a droll wink, as much as to say, 'Gammon!'

When Robinson returned to the sceptical shopkeeper with a board on which oak satin-wood walnut, etc., were imitated to the life in squares, that worthy gave a start and betrayed his admiration, and Robinson asked him five shillings more than he would if the other had been more considerate. In short before evening the door was painted a splendid imitation of walnut-wood, the shopkeeper was enchanted, and Robinson had fifteen shillings handed over to him. He ran and got Mr. Eden's ring out of pawn, and kissed it and put it on; next he liberated his hat. He slept better this night than the last.

'One more such day and I shall have enough to pay my expenses to Bathurst.'

He turned out early and went into the town. He went into the street where he had worked last evening, and when he came near his door there was a knot of persons round it. Robinson joined them. Presently one of the shop-boys cried out—

‘Why here he is, this is the painter.’

Instantly three or four hands were laid on Robinson.

‘Come and paint my door.’

‘No come and paint mine.’

‘No, mine.’

Tom had never been in such request since he was an itinerant quack. His sly eye twinkled, and this artist put himself up to auction then and there. He was knocked down to a tradesman in the same street—twenty-one shillings the price of this door (mock mahogany). While he was working commissions poured in and Robinson’s price rose, the demand for him being greater than the supply. The mahogany door was really a *chef-d’œuvre*. He came home triumphant with thirty shillings in his pocket, he spread them out on the kitchen table and looked at them with a pride and a thrill of joy money never gave him before. He had often closed the shutters and furtively spread out twice as many sovereigns, but they were only his, these shillings were his own. And they were not only his own but his own by labour. Each sacred shilling represented so much virtue, for industry is a virtue. He looked at them with a father’s pride.

How sweet the butter our own hands have churned!—T.T.

He blessed his reverend friend for having taught him an art in a dung-hole where idiots and savages teach crank. He blessed his reverence’s four bones, his favourite imprecation of the benevolent kind. I conclude the four bones meant the arms and legs: if so

it would have been more to the point had he blessed the fifth—the scull.

Jenny came in and found him gloating over his virtuous shillings. She stared. He told her what he had been about these two days past, his difficulties, his success, the admiration his work excited throughout the capital (he must exaggerate a little or it would not be Tom Robinson), and the wealth he was amassing.

Jenny was glad to hear this, very glad, but she scolded him well for pawning his hat.

'Why didn't you ask me?' said she; 'I would have lent you a pound or even two, or given them you for any *honest* purpose.'

And Jenny pouted and got up a little quarrel.

The next day a gentleman caught Robinson and made him paint two doors in his fancy villa. Satinwood this time; and he received three pounds three shillings, a good dinner, and what Bohemians all adore—Praise. Now as he returned in the evening a sudden misgiving came to him.

'I have not thought once of Bathurst to day. I see all this money-making is a contrivance to keep me in Sydney. It is absurd my coining paint at this rate. I see your game my lad; either I am to fall into bad company again, or to be split upon and nabbed for that last job. To-morrow I will be on the road to Bathurst. I can paint there just as well as here; besides I have got my orders from his reverence to go, and I'll go.'

He told Jane his resolution: she made no answer.

While these two were sitting cosily by the fire-side,

for since Robinson took to working hard all day he began to relish the hearth at night, suddenly cheerful boisterous voices, and Mr. Miles and two friends burst in and would have an extempore supper, and nothing else would serve these libertines but mutton chops off the gridiron. So they invaded the kitchen. Out ran Jenny to avoid them—or put on a smarter cap; and Robinson was to cut the chops and lay a cloth on the dresser and help cook. While his master went off to the cellar the two rakes who remained chattered and laughed both pretty loud. They had dined together and the bottle had not stood still.

‘I have heard that voice before’ thought Robinson. ‘It is a very peculiar voice. Whose voice is that?’

He looked the gentleman full in the face and could hardly suppress a movement of surprise.

The gentleman by the instinct of the eye caught his and his attention was suddenly attracted to Robinson, and from that moment his eye was never off Robinson following him everywhere. Robinson affected not to notice this; the chops were grilling, Jenny came in and bustled about and pretended not to hear the side-compliments of the libertines. Presently the young gentleman with the peculiar voice took out his pocket-book and said—

‘I have a bet to propose. I’ll bet you fifty pounds I find the man you two hunted down the road on Monday night.’

‘No takers’ replied Mr. Hazeltine with his mouth full.

'Stop a bit. I don't care if I make a time bet' said Miles. 'How soon will you bet you catch him?'

'In half an hour' was the cool reply. And the Honourable George while making it managed at the same time in a sauntering sort of way to put himself between Robinson and the door that led out into the garden.

Robinson eyed him in silence and never moved.

'In half an-hour. That is a fair bet' said Mr. Miles. 'Shall I take him?'

'Better not; he is a knowing one. He has seen him to earth somewhere or he would not offer you such a bet.'

'Well, I'll bet you five to three' proposed the Honourable George.

'Done!'

'Done!'

Robinson put in a hasty word: 'And what is to become of Thimble-rig Jem, sir?'

These words addressed to Mr. Lascelles produced a singular effect. That gentleman gave an immediate shiver as if a bullet had passed clean through him and out again, then opened his eyes and looked first at one door then at the other as if hesitating which he should go by.

Robinson continued, addressing him with marked respect, "What I mean sir is that there is a Government reward of two hundred pounds for Thimble-rig Jem, and the police wouldn't like to be drawn away from two hundred pounds after a poor fellow like him

you saw on Monday night, one that is only suspected and no reward offered. Now Jem is a notorious culprit.’

‘Who is this Jem my man? What is he?’ asked Mr. Lascelles with a composure that contrasted remarkably with his late emotion.

‘A convict escaped from Norfolk Island sir; an old offender. I fell in with him once. He has forgotten me I dare say, but I never forget a man. They say he has grown a moustache and whiskers and passes himself off for a nob; but I could swear to him.’

‘How? By what?’ cried Mr. Miles.

‘If he should ever be fool enough to get in my way—’

‘Hang Thimble-rig Jem,’ cried Hazeltine. ‘Is it a bet Lascelles?’

‘What?’

‘That you nab our one in half an-hour?’

Mr. Lascelles affected an aristocratic drawl: ‘No, I was joking. I couldn’t afford to leave the fire for thirty pounds. Why should I run after the poor dayvil. Find him yourselves. He never annoyed me. Got a cigar Miles?’

After their chops, etc., the rakes went off to finish the night elsewhere.

‘There, they are gone at last! Why Jenny, how pale you look!’ said Robinson not seeing the colour of his own cheek. ‘What is wrong?’

Jenny answered by sitting down and bursting out crying.

Tom sat opposite her with his eyes on the ground.

'Oh, what I have gone through this day!' cried Jenny. 'Oh! oh! oh! oh!' sobbing convulsively.

What could Tom do but console her? And she found it so agreeable to be consoled that she prolonged her distress. An impressionable Bohemian on one side a fireplace, and a sweet pretty girl crying on the other, what wonder that two o'clock in the morning found this pair sitting on the same side of the fire aforesaid her hand in his?

The next morning at six o'clock Jenny was down to make his breakfast for him before starting. If she had said 'Don't go,' it is to be feared the temptation would have been too strong, but she did not; she said sorrowfully 'You are right to leave this town.' She never explained. Tom never heard from her own lips how far her suspicions went. He was a coward, and seeing how shrewd she was was afraid to ask her; and she was one of your natural ladies who can leave a thing unsaid out of delicacy.

Tom Robinson was what Jenny called 'capital company.' He had won her admiration by his conversation, his stories of life, and now and then a song, and by his good looks and good nature. She disguised her affection admirably until he was in danger and about to leave her and then she betrayed herself. If she was fire he was tow. At last it came to this:

'Don't you cry so, dear girl. I have got a question to put to you—IF I COME BACK A BETTER MAN THAN I GO, WILL YOU BE MRS. ROBINSON?'

'Yes.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

ROBINSON started for Bathurst. Just before he got clear of the town he passed the poor man's cottage who had lent him the board. 'Bless me, how came I to forget him!' said he. At that moment the man came out to go to work.

'Here I am' said Robinson meeting him full, 'and here is your board;' showing it to him painted in squares. 'Can't afford to give it you back—it is my advertisement. But here is half-a-crown for it and for your trusting me.'

'Well to be sure' cried the man. 'Now who'd have thought this? Why if the world is not turning honest. But half-a-crown is too much; 'tain't worth the half of it.'

'It was worth five pounds to me. I got employment through it. Look here,' and he showed him several pounds in silver; 'all this came from your board; so take your half-crown and my thanks on the head of it.'

The half-crown lay in the man's palm; he looked in Robinson's face: 'Well' cried he with astonishment 'you are the honestest man ever I fell in with.'

'I am the honestest man! You will go to heaven for saying those words to me' cried Robinson warmly and with agitation. 'Good-bye my good charitable soul; you deserve ten times what you have got,' and Robinson made off.

The other as soon as he recovered the shock shouted after him 'Good-bye honest man, and good luck wherever you go.'

And Robinson heard him scuttle about and hastily convene small boys and despatch them down the road to look at an honest man. But the young wood did not kindle at his enthusiasm. Had the rarity been a bear with a monkey on him well and good.

'I'm pretty well paid for a little honesty' thought Robinson. He stepped gallantly out in high spirits and thought of Jenny and fell in love with her, and saw in her affection yet another inducement to be honest and industrious. Nothing of note happened on his way to Bathurst, except that one day as he was tramping along very hot and thirsty a luscious prickly pear hung over a wall, and many a respectable man would have taken it without scruple; but Tom was so afraid of beginning again he turned his back on it and ran on instead of walking to make sure.

When he reached Bathurst his purse was very low and he had a good many more miles to go, and not feeling quite sure of his welcome he did not care to be penniless, so he went round the town with his advertising board and very soon was painting doors in Bathurst. He found the natives stingier here than in

Sydney and they had a notion a traveller like him ought to work much cheaper than an established man; but still he put by something every day.

He had been three days in the town when a man stepped up to him as he finished a job and asked him to go home with him. The man took him to a small but rather neat shop, plumber’s glazier’s and painter’s.

‘Why you don’t want me’ said Robinson; ‘we are in the same line of business.’

‘Step in’ said the man. In a few words he let Robinson know that he had a great bargain to offer him. ‘I am going to sell the shop’ said he. ‘It is a business I never much fancied and I had rather sell it to a stranger than to a Bathurst man for the trade have offended me. There is not a man in the colony can work like you, and you may make a little fortune here.’

Robinson’s eyes sparkled a moment, then he replied ‘I am too poor to buy a business. What do you want for it?’

‘Only sixty pounds for the articles in the shop and the good-will and all.’

‘Well, I dare say it is moderate, but how am I to find sixty pounds?’

‘I’ll make it as light as a feather. Five pounds down. Five pounds in a month; after that ten pounds a-month till we are clear. Take possession and sell the goods and work the goodwill on payment of the first five.’

'That is very liberal' said Robinson. 'Well give me till next Thursday and I'll bring you the first five.'

'Oh, I can't do that; I give you the first offer, but into the market it goes this evening and no later.'

'I'll call this evening and see if I can do it.'

Robinson tried to make up the money, but it was not to be done. Then fell a terrible temptation upon him. Handling George Fielding's letter with his delicate fingers he had satisfied himself there was a bank-note in it. Why not borrow this bank-note? The shop would soon repay it. The idea rushed over him like a flood. At the same moment he took fright at it—

'Lord help me!' he ejaculated.

He rushed to a shop, bought two or three sheets of brown paper, and a lot of wafers. With nimble fingers he put the letter in one parcel, that parcel in another, that in another, and so on till there were a dozen envelopes between him and the irregular loan. This done he confided the grand parcel to his landlord.

'Give it me when I start.'

He went no more near the little shop till he had made seven pounds; then he went. The shop and business had been sold just twenty-four hours. Robinson groaned—

'If I had not been so very honest! Never mind. I must take the bitter with the sweet.'

For all that the town became distasteful to him. He bought a cheap revolver—for there was a talk of bush-rangers in the neighbourhood—and started to walk

to George Fielding’s farm. He reached it in the evening.

‘There is no George Fielding here’ was the news.
‘He left this more than six months ago.’

‘Do you know where he is?’

‘Not I.’

Robinson had to ask everybody he met where George Fielding was gone to. At last, by good luck he fell in with George’s friend McLaughlan, who told him it was twenty-five miles off.

‘Twenty-five miles? that must be for to-morrow then.’

McLaughlan told him he knew George Fielding very well: ‘He is a fine lad.’ Then he asked Robinson what was his business. Robinson took down a very thin light board with ornamental words painted on it.

‘That is my business,’ said he.

At the sight of a real business the worthy Scot offered to take care of him for the night and put him on the road to Fielding’s next morning. Next morning Robinson painted his front door as a return for bed and breakfast. McLaughlan gave him somewhat intricate instructions for to-morrow’s route. Robinson followed them and soon lost his way. He was set right again, but lost it again; and after a tremendous day’s walk made up his mind he should have to camp in the open air and without his supper when he heard a dog baying in the distance.

‘There is a house of some kind anyway,’ thought

Robinson, 'but where?—I see none—better make for the dog.'

He made straight for the sound, but still he could not see any house. At last however coming over a hill he found a house beneath him, and on the other side of this house the dog was howling incessantly. Robinson came down the hill, walked round the house, and there sat the dog on the steps.

'Well it is you for howling anyway' said Robinson. 'Anybody at home?' he shouted.

No one answered and the dog howled on.

'Why, the place is deserted I think. Haven't I seen that dog before? Why, it is Carlo! Here Carlo, poor fellow, Carlo, what is the matter?'

The dog gave a little whimper as Robinson stooped and patted him, but no sign of positive recognition; but he pattered into the house. Robinson followed him, and there he found the man he had come to see—stretched on his bed pale and hollow-eyed and grisly and looking like a corpse in the fading light.

Robinson was awe-struck.

'Oh! what is this?' said he. 'Have I come all this way to bury him?'

He leaned over him and felt his heart; it beat feebly but equably and he muttered something unintelligible when Robinson touched him. Then Robinson struck a light, and right glad he was to find a caldron full of gelatinised beef soup. He warmed some and ate a great supper, and Carlo sat and whimpered and then wagged his tail and plucked up more and more spirit, and finally

recognised Tom all in a moment somehow and announced the fact by one great disconnected bark and a saltatory motion. This done he turned to and also ate a voracious supper. Robinson rolled himself up in George’s great-coat and slept like a top on the floor. Next morning he was waked by a tapping, and there was Carlo seated bolt upright with his tail beating the floor because George was sitting up in the bed looking about him in a puzzled way.

‘Jacky’ said he ‘is that you?’

Robinson got up, rubbed his eyes, and came towards the bed. George stared in his face and rubbed his eyes too, for he thought he must be under an ocular delusion—

‘Who are you?’

‘A friend.’

‘Well! I didn’t think to see you under a roof of mine again.’

‘Just the welcome I expected,’ thought Robinson bitterly.

He answered coldly—

‘Well, as soon as you are well you can turn me out of your house, but I should say you are not strong enough to do it just now.’

‘No, I am weak enough, but I am better—I could eat something.’

‘Oh, you could do that! what! even if I cooked it. Here goes then.’

Tom lit the fire and warmed some beef soup. George ate some, but very little; however he drank a great

jugful of water, then dozed, and fell into a fine perspiration. It was a favourable crisis, and from that moment youth and a sound constitution began to pull him through; moreover no assassin had been there with his lancet.

Behold the thief turned nurse! The next day as he potted about clearing the room, opening or shutting the windows, cooking and serving, he noticed George's eye following him everywhere with a placid wonder which at last broke into words:—

'You take a deal of trouble about me.'

'I do' was the dry answer.

'It is very good of you, but—'

'You would as lieve it was anybody else; but your other friends have left you to die like a dog' said Robinson sarcastically. 'Well, they left you when you were sick—I'll leave you when you are well.'

'What for? Seems to me that you have earned a right to stay as long as you are minded. The man that stands by me in trouble I won't bid him go when the sun shines again.'

And at this precise point in his sentence, without the least warning, Mr. Fielding ignited himself and inquired with fury whether it came within Robinson's individual experience that George Fielding was of an ungrateful turn or whether such was the general voice of fame.

'Now don't you get in a rage and burst your boiler' said Robinson. 'Well, George without joking though I have been kind to you, not for nursing you—what Christian would not do that for his country—'

man and his old landlord sick in a desert?—but what would you think of me if I told you I’d come a hundred and sixty miles to bring you a letter? I wouldn’t show it you before, for they say exciting them is bad for fever, but I think I may venture now; here it is.’

And Robinson tore off one by one the twelve envelopes to George’s astonishment and curiosity.

‘There.’

‘I don’t know the hand’ said George. But opening the enclosure he caught a glance of a hand he did know, and let everything else drop on the bed, while he held this and gazed at it, and the colour flushed into his white cheek.

‘Oh!’ cried he, and worshipped it in silence again; then opened it and devoured it. First came some precious words of affection and encouragement. He kissed the letter.

‘You are a good fellow to bring me such a treasure; and I’ll never forget it as long as I live.’

Then he went back to the letter.

‘There is something about you, Tom!’

‘About me?’

‘She tells me you never had a father, not to say a father—’

‘She says true.’

‘Susan says that is a great disadvantage to any man, and so it is —and—poor fellow—’

‘What?’

‘She says they came between your sweetheart and you—Oh! poor Tom!’

'What?'

'You lost your sweetheart; no wonder you went astray after that. What would become of me if I lost my Susan. And—ay, you were always better than me, Susan. She says she and I have never been sore tempted like you.'

'Bless her little heart for making excuses for a poor fellow; but she was always a charitable kindhearted young lady.'

'Wasn't she Tom?'

'And what sweet eyes!'

'Ain't they Tom? brimful of heaven I call them.'

'And when she used to smile on you Master George, oh! the ivories.'

'Now you take my hand this minute. How foolish I am: I can't see—now you shall read it on to me because you brought it.'

'“And you, George, that are as honest a man as ever lived, do keep him by you awhile, and keep him in the right way. He is well-disposed, but weak, do it to oblige me.”'

'Will you stay with me Tom?' inquired George, cheerful and business-like. 'I am not a lucky man, but while I have a shilling there's sixpence for the man that brought me this—dew in the desert I call it. And to think you have seen her since I have; how was she looking; had she her beautiful colour; what did she say to you with her own mouth?'

Then Robinson had to recall every word Susan had said to him; this done, George took up the enclosure.

‘ Stop, here is something for you. “ George Fielding is requested to give this to Robinson for the use of Thomas Sinclair.” There you are Tom—well!—what is the matter?’

‘ Nothing. It is a name I have not heard a while. I did not know any creature but me knew it; is it glamour, or what?’

‘ Why, Tom! what is the matter? don’t look like that. Open it, and let us see what there is inside.’

Robinson opened it, and there was the five-pound note for him, with this line—

“ You have regained the name of Sinclair, keep it.”

Robinson ran out of the house, and walked to and fro in a state of exaltation.

‘ I’m well paid for my journey; I’m well paid for not fingering that note. Who would not be honest if they knew the sweets! How could he know my name, is he really more than man? Keep it? Will I not!’

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE old attachment was revived. Robinson had always a great regard for George, and after nursing and bringing him through a dangerous illness this feeling doubled. And as for George, the man who had brought him a letter from Susan one hundred and sixty miles became such a benefactor in his eyes that he thought nothing good enough for him.

In a very few days George was about again and on his pony, and he and Robinson and Carlo went a shepherding. One or two bullocks had gone to Jericho while George lay ill, and the poor fellow's heart was sore when he looked at his diminished substance and lost time. Robinson threw himself heart and soul into the business, and was of great service to George; but after a bit he found it a dull life.

George saw this, and said to him—

‘ You would do better in a town. I should be sorry to lose you, but if you take my advice you will turn your back on unlucky George, and try the paint-brush in Bathurst.’ For Robinson had told him all about it, and painted his front door.

‘Can’t afford to part from Honesty’ was the firm reply.

George breathed again. Robinson was a great comfort to the weak, solitary, and now desponding man. One day for a change they had a thirty-mile walk, to see a farmer that had some beasts to sell a great bargain; he was going to boil them down if he could not find a customer. They found them all just sold.

‘Just my luck’ said George.

They came home another way. Returning home, George was silent and depressed. Robinson was silent, but appeared to be swelling with some grand idea. Every now and then he shot ahead under its influence. When they got home and were seated at supper, he suddenly put this question to George,

‘Did you ever hear of any gold being found in these parts?’

‘No! never!’

‘What, not in any part of the country?’

‘No! never!’

‘Well, that is odd!’

‘I am afraid it is a very bad country for that.’

‘Ay to make it in, but not to find it in.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘George’ said the other lowering his voice mysteriously ‘in our walk to-day we passed places that brought my heart into my mouth; for if this was only California those places would be pockets of gold.’

‘But you see it is not California, but Australia where all the world knows there is nothing of what your mind is running on.’

'Don't say "knows," say "thinks." Has it ever been searched for gold?'

'I'll be bound it has: or if not, with so many eyes constantly looking on every foot of soil a speck or two would have come to light.'

'One would think so, but it is astonishing how blind folks are, till they are taught how to look, and where to look. 'Tis the mind that sees things George, not the eye.'

'Ah!' said George with a sigh 'this chat puts me in mind of "The Grove." Do you mind how you used to pester everybody to go out to California?'

'Yes! and I wish we were there now.'

'And all your talk used to be gold gold gold.'

'As well say it as think it.'

'That is true. Well, we shall be very busy all day to-morrow, but in the afternoon dig for gold an hour or two, then you will be satisfied.'

'But it is no use digging here; it was full five and twenty miles from here the likely-looking place.'

'Then why didn't you stop me at the place?'

'Why?' replied Robinson, sourly, 'because his reverence did so snub me whenever I got upon that favourite topic, that I really had got out of the habit. I was ashamed to say "George, let us stop on the road and try for gold with our finger-nails." I knew I should only get laughed at.'

'Well' said George sarcastically 'since the gold mine is twenty-five miles off, and our work is round

about the door, suppose we pen sheep to-morrow and dig for gold when there is nothing better to be done.’

Robinson sighed.

Unbucolical to the last degree was the spirit in which our Bohemian tended the flocks next morning. His thoughts were deeper than the soil. And every evening up came the old topic. Oh ! how sick George got of it. At last one night he said—

‘ My lad I should like to tell you a story, but I suppose I shall make a bungle of it ; shan’t cut the furrow clean I’m doubtful.’

‘ Never mind ; try !’

‘ Well then. Once upon a time there was an old chap that had heard or read about treasures being found in odd places, a pot full of guineas or something, and it took root in his heart, till nothing would serve him but he must find a pot of guineas too ; he used to poke about all the old ruins grubbing away, and would have taken up the floor of the church but the churchwardens would not have it. One morning he comes down and says to his wife, “ It is all right old woman, I’ve found the treasure.”

‘ “ No ! have you though ?” says she.

‘ “ Yes !” says he ? “ leastways, it is as good as found ; it is only waiting till I’ve had my breakfast, and then I’ll go out and fetch it in.”

‘ “ La John but how did you find it ?”

‘ “ It was revealed to me in a dream” says he, as grave as a judge.

‘ “ And where is it ?” asks the old woman.

' "Under a tree in our own orchard—no further," says he.

' "Oh, John! how long you are at breakfast to-day!"

' Up they both got and into the orchard.

' "Now, which tree is it under?"

' John, he scratches his head, "Blest if I know."

' "Why, you old ninny" says the mistress "didn't you take the trouble to notice?"

' "That I did" said he; "I saw plain enough which tree it was in my dream, but now they muddle it all, there are so many of 'em."

' "Drat your stupid old head" says she, "why didn't you put a nick on the right one at the time?"'

Robinson burst out laughing.

George chuckled.

' "Oh!" said he; there were a pair of them for wisdom, you may take your oath of that.

' "Well," says he, "I must dig till I find the right one."

' The wife she loses heart at this; for there was eighty apple-trees, and a score of cherry-trees. "Mind you don't cut the roots" says she, and she heaves a sigh.

' John he gives them bad language root and branch. "What signifies cut or not cut; the old faggots they don't bear me a bushel of fruit the whole lot. They used to bear two sacks a piece in father's time. Drat 'em."

' "Well John" says the old woman smoothing him down; "father used to give them a deal of attention."

' "T'aint that! t'aint that!" says he quick and spiteful-like; "they have got old like ourselves, and good for fire-wood."

‘ Out pickaxe and spade, and digs three foot deep round one, and finding nothing but mould, goes at another, makes a little mound all round him too—no guinea-pot.

‘ Well the village let him dig three or four quiet enough; but after that curiosity was awakened, and while John was digging and that was all day there was mostly seven or eight watching through the fence and passing their jests. After a bit a fashion came up of flinging a stone or two at John; then John he brought out his gun loaded with dust-shot along with his pick and spade, and the first stone came he fired sharp in that direction and then loaded again. So they took that hint, and John dug on in peace till about the fourth Sunday and then the parson had a slap at him in church. “ Folks were not to heap up to themselves treasures on earth” was all his discourse.’

‘ Well but’ said Robinson ‘ this one was only heaping up mould.’

‘ So it seemed when he had dug the five-score holes, for no pot of gold didn’t come to light. Then the neighbours called the orchard “ Jacobs’ Folly;” his name was Jacobs—John Jacobs.

‘ “ Now then wife,” says he, “ suppose you and I look out for another village to live in, for their gibes are more than I can bear.”

‘ Old woman begins to cry. “ Been here so long—brought me home here John, when we were first married John, and I was a comely lass, and you the smartest young man I ever saw to my fancy any way;

couldn't sleep or eat my victuals in any house but this."

"Oh! couldn't ye? Well then, we must stay; perhaps it will blow over."

"Like everything else John; but dear John, do ye fill in those holes; the young folk come far and wide on Sundays to see them."

"Wife I haven't the heart" says he. "You see, when I was digging for the treasure I was always a going to find, it kept my heart up; but take out shovel and fill them in—I'd as lieve dine off white of egg on a Sunday." So for six blessed months the heaps were out in the heat and frost, till the end of February, and then when the weather broke the old man takes heart and fills them in, and the village soon forgot "Jacobs' Folly" because it was out of sight.

'Comes April, and out burst the trees. "Wife," says he "our bloom is richer than I've known it this many a year, it is richer than our neighbours'." Bloom dies, and then out come about a million little green things quite hard.'

'Ay! ay!' said Robinson; 'I see.'

'Michaelmas-day the old trees were staggering, and the branches down to the ground with the crop; thirty shillings on every tree one with another; and so on for the next year, and the next; sometimes more, sometimes less, according to the year. Trees were old, and wanted a change. His letting in the air to them and turning the subsoil up to the frost and sun had renewed their youth. So by that he learned that

tillage is the way to get treasure from the earth. Men are ungrateful at times, but the soil is never ungrateful, it always makes a return for the pains we give it.’

‘Well George’ said Robinson, ‘thank you for your story; it is a very good one, and after it I’ll never dig for gold in a garden. But now suppose a bare rock or an old river’s bed, or a mass of shingles or pipe-clay, would you dig or manure them for crops?’

‘Why of course not.’

‘Well those are the sort of places in which nature has planted a yellower crop and a richer crop than tillage ever produced. And I believe there are plumbs of gold not thirty miles from here in such spots waiting only to be dug out.’

‘Well Tom, I have wasted a parable, that is all. Good night. I hope to sleep and be ready for a good day’s work to-morrow. You shall dream of digging up gold here—if you like.’

‘I’ll never speak of it again’ said Robinson doggedly.

If you want to make a man a bad companion interdict altogether the topic that happens to interest him.

Robinson ceased to vent his chimera. So it swelled and swelled in his heart, and he became silent absorbed absent, and out of spirits.

‘Ah!’ thought George ‘poor fellow he is very dull. He won’t stay beside me much longer.’

This conviction was so strong that he hesitated to close with an advantageous offer that came to him from his friend Mr. Winchester. That gentleman had

taken a lease of a fine run some thirty miles from George. He had written George that he was to go and look at it, and if he liked it better than his own he was to take it. Mr. Winchester could make no considerable use of either for some time to come.

George hesitated. He felt himself so weak-handed with only Robinson, who might leave him, and a shepherd lad he had just hired. However his hands were unexpectedly strengthened.

One day as the two friends were washing a sheep an armed savage suddenly stood before them. Robinson dropped the sheep and stood on his defence, but George cried out 'No! no! it is Jacky! Why Jacky, where on earth have you been?' And he came warmly towards him. Jacky fled to a small eminence, and made war-like preparations.

'You stop you a good while and I speak. Who you?'

'Who am I stupid. Why who should I be but George Fielding?'

'I see you one George Fielding, but I not know you dis George Fielding. George die. I see him die. You alive. You please you call dog Carlo? Carlo wise dog.'

'Well I never! Hie Carlo! Carlo!'

Up came Carlo full pelt. George patted him, and Carlo wagged his tail and pranced about in the shape of a reaping-hook. Jacky came instantly down, showed his ivories, and admitted his friend's existence on the word of the dog.

'Jacky a good deal glad because you not dead now. When black fellow die he never live any more. Black

fellow stupid fellow. I tink I like white fellow good deal bigger than black fellow. Now I stay with you a good while.’

George’s hands thus strengthened he wrote and told Mr. Winchester he would go to the new ground, which as far as he could remember was very good, and would inspect it, and probably make the exchange with thanks.

It was arranged that in two days’ time the three friends should go together, inspect the new ground, and build a temporary hut there.

Meantime Robinson and Jacky made great friends. Robinson showed him one or two sleight-of-hand tricks that stamped him at once a superior being in Jacky’s eyes, and Jacky showed Robinson a thing or two. He threw his boomerang and made it travel a couple of hundred yards, and return and hover over his head like a bird and settle at his feet; but he was shy of throwing his spear.

‘Keep spear for when um angry, not throw him straight now.’

‘Don’t you believe that Tom’ said George. ‘Fact is the little varmint can’t hit anything with ’em. Now look at that piece of bark leaning against that tree. You don’t hit it. Come, try Jacky?’

Jacky yawned and threw a spear carelessly. It went close by but did not hit it.

‘Didn’t I tell you so?’ said George. ‘I’d stand before him and his spears all day with nothing but a cricket-stump in my hand and never be hit, and never brag neither.’

Jacky showed his ivories.

'When I down at Sydney white man put up a little wood and a bit of white money for Jacky. Then Jacky throw straight a good deal.'

'Now hark to that, black skin or white skin 'tis all the same; we can't do our best till we are paid for it. Don't you encourage him Tom, I won't have it.'

The two started early one fine morning for the new ground distant full thirty miles. At first starting Robinson was in high glee; his nature delighted in change; but George was sad and silent. Three times he had changed his ground and always for the better. But to what end. These starts in early morning for fresh places used once to make him buoyant, but not now. All that was over. He persisted doggedly, and did his best like a man, but in his secret heart not one grain of hope was left. Indeed it was but the other day he had written to Susan and told her it was not possible he could make a thousand pounds. Now the difficulties were too many, and then his losses had been too great. And he told her he felt it was scarcely fair to keep her to her promise. 'You would waste all your youth Susan dear waiting for me.' And he told her how he loved her and never should love another; but left her free.

To add to his troubles he was scarcely well of the fever when he caught a touch of rheumatism. And the stalwart young fellow limped along by Robinson's side, and instead of his distancing Jacky as he used in better days, Jacky rattled on a-head and having got on

the trail of an opossum announced his intention of hunting it down and then following the human trail.

‘Me catch you before the sun go, and bring opossum, then we eat a good deal.’ And off glided Jacky after his opossum.

The pair plodded and limped on in gloomy silence, for at a part of the road where they emerged from green meadows on rocks and broken ground Robinson’s tongue had suddenly ceased.

They plodded on, one sad and stiff the other thoughtful. Any one meeting the pair would have pitied them. Ill-success was stamped on them. Their features were so good, their fortunes so unkind. Their clothes were sadly worn, their beards neglected, their looks thoughtful and sad. The convert to honesty stole more than one look at the noble figure that limped beside him and the handsome face in which gentle uncomplaining sorrow seemed to be a tenant for life. And to the credit of our nature be it said that his eyes filled and his heart yearned.

‘Oh Honesty!’ said he ‘you are ill-paid here. I have been well-paid for my little bit of you, but here is a life of honesty and a life of ill-luck and bitter disappointment. Poor George! poor dear George! Leave you, never while I have hands to work and a brain to devise.’

They now began slowly to mount a gentle slope that ended in a long black snake-like hill.

‘When we get to that hill we shall see my new pasture’ said George. ‘New or old I doubt ’twill be

all the same.' And he sighed and relapsed into silence.

Meantime Jacky had killed his opossum and was now following their trail at an easy trot.

Leaving the two sad ones with worn clothes and heavy hearts plodding slowly and stiffly up the long rough slope our story runs on before and gains the rocky platform they are making for and looks both ways—back towards the sad ones and forward over a grand long sweeping valley. This pasture is rich in proportion as it recedes from this huge backbone of rock that comes from the stony mountains and pierces and divides the meadows as a cape the sea. In the foreground the grass suffers from its stern neighbour, is cut up here and there by the channels of defunct torrents, and dotted with fragments of rock, some of which seem to have pierced the bosom of the soil from below, others have been detached at different epochs from the parent rock and rolled into the valley : but these wounds are only discovered on inspection ; at a general glance from the rocky road into the dale the prospect is large rich and laughing ; fairer pastures are to be found in that favoured land, but this sparkles at you like an emerald roughly set, and where the backbone of rock gives a sudden twist bursts out all at once broad smiling in your face a land flowing with milk and every bush a thousand nosegays.

At the angle above mentioned, which commanded a double view, a man was standing watching some object or objects not visible to his three companions ; they were

working some yards lower down by the side of a rivulet that brawled and bounded down the hill. Every now and then an inquiry was shouted up to that individual, who was evidently a sort of scout or sentinel.

At last one of the men in the ravine came up and bade the scout go down.

‘I’ll soon tell you whether we shall have to knock off work.’ And he turned the corner and disappeared.

He shaded both his eyes with his hands, for the sun was glaring. About a mile off he saw two men coming slowly up by a zig-zag path towards the very point where he stood. Presently the men stopped and examined the prospect, each in his own way. The taller one took a wide survey of the low ground, and calling his companion to him appeared to point out to him some beauty or peculiarity of the region. Our scout stepped back and called down to his companions,

‘Shepherds!’

He then strolled back to his post with no particular anxiety. Arrived there his uneasiness seemed to revive. The shorter of the two strangers had lagged behind his comrade, and the watcher observed that he was carrying on a close and earnest inspection of the ground in detail. He peered into the hollows and loitered in every ravine. This gave singular offence to the keen eye that was now upon him. Presently he was seen to stop and call his taller companion to him, and point with great earnestness first to something at their feet, then to the back-bone of rocks; and it so

happened by mere accident that his finger took nearly the direction of the very spot where the observer of all his movements stood. The man started back out of sight, and called in a low voice to his comrades,

'Come here.'

They came straggling up with troubled and lowering faces.

'Lie down and watch them' said the leader.

The men stooped and crawled forward to some stunted bushes, behind which they lay down and watched in silence the unconscious pair who were now about two furlongs distant. The shorter of the two still loitered behind his companion, and inspected the ground with particular interest. The leader of the band, who went by the name of Black Will, muttered a curse upon his inquisitiveness. The others assented all but one, a huge fellow whom the others addressed as Jem.

'Nonsense' said Jem 'dozens pass this way and are none the wiser.'

'Ay' replied Black Will 'with their noses in the air. But that is a notice-taking fellow. Look at him with his eyes for ever on the rocks, or in the gullies, or—there if he is not picking up a stone and breaking it!'

'Ha! ha!' laughed Jem incredulously 'how many thousand have picked up stones and broke them and all, and never known what we know.'

'He has been in the same oven as we' retorted the other.

Here one of the others put in his word. ‘That is not likely captain; but if it is so there are no two ways. A secret is no secret if all the world is to know it.’

‘You remember our oath. Jem’ said the leader sternly.

‘Why should I forget it more than another?’ replied the other angrily.

‘Have you all your knives?’ said the captain gloomily.

The men nodded assent.

‘Cross them with me as we did when we took our oath first.’

The men stretched out each a brawny arm and a long sharp knife so that all the points came together in a focus; and this action suited well with their fierce and animal features, their long neglected beards, their matted hair, and their gleaming eyes. It looked the prologue to some deed of blood. This done, at another word from their ruffianly leader they turned away from the angle in the rock and plunged hastily down the ravine; but they had scarcely taken thirty steps when they suddenly disappeared.

In the neighbourhood of the small stream I have mentioned was a cavern of irregular shape that served these men for a habitation and place of concealment. Nature had not done all. The stone was soft, and the natural cavity had been enlarged and made a comfortable retreat enough for the hardy men whose home it was. A few feet from the mouth of the cave on one side grew

a stout bush that added to the shelter and the concealment, and on the other the men themselves had placed two or three huge stones, which from the attitude the rogues had given them appeared, like many others, to have rolled thither years ago from the rock above.

In this retreat the whole band were now silently couched, two of them in the mouth of the cave, Black Will and another lying flat on their stomachs watching the angle of the road for the two men who must pass that way, and listening for every sound. Black Will was carefully and quietly sharpening his knife on one of the stones, and casting back every now and then a meaning glance to his companions. The pertinacity with which he held to his idea began to tell on them, and they sat in an attitude of sullen and terrible suspicion. But Jem wore a look of contemptuous incredulity. However small a society may be, if it is a human one jealousy shall creep in. Jem grudged Black Will his captaincy. Jem was intellectually a bit of a brute: he was a stronger man than Will, and therefore thought it hard that merely because Will was a keener spirit Will should be over him. Half an hour passed thus, and the two travellers did not make their appearance.

'Not even coming this way at all' said Jem.

'Hush!' replied Will sternly 'hold your tongue. They must come this way, and they can't be far off. Jem, you can crawl out and see where they are if you are clever enough to keep that great body out of sight.'

Jem resented this doubt cast upon his adroitness, and

crawled out among the bushes. He had scarcely got twenty yards when he halted and made a signal that the men were in sight. Soon afterwards he came back with less precaution.

‘They are sitting eating their dinner close by, just on the sunny side of the rock—shepherds, as I told you—got a dog. Go yourself if you don’t believe me.’

The leader went to the spot, and soon after returned and said quietly,

‘Pals I dare say he is right. Lie still till they have had their dinner; they are going farther no doubt.’

Soon after this he gave a hasty signal of silence, for George and Robinson at that moment came round the corner of the rock and stood on the road not fifty yards above them. Here they paused as the valley burst on their view, and George pointed out its qualities to his comrade.

‘It is not first-rate Tom, but there is good grass in patches, and plenty of water.’

Robinson, instead of replying or giving his mind to the prospect said to George,

‘Why, where is he?’

‘Who?’

‘The man that I saw standing at this corner a while ago. He came round this way I’ll be sworn.’

‘He is gone away I suppose. I never saw any one for my part.’

‘I did though. Gone away? How could he go away? The road is in sight for miles, and not a creature on it. He is vanished.’

'I don't see him any way Tom.'

'Of course you don't, he is vanished into the bowels of the earth. I don't like gentlemen that vanish into the bowels of the earth.'

'How suspicious you are! Bush-rangers again, I suppose. They are always running in your mind—them and gold.'

'You know the country George. Here take my stick.' And he handed George a long stick with a heavy iron ferule. 'If a man is safe here he owes it to himself, not to his neighbour.'

'Then why do you give me your weapon?' said George with a smile.

'I haven't' was the reply. 'I carry my sting out of sight like a humble bee.'

And Mr. Robinson winked mysteriously, and the process seemed to relieve his mind and soothe his suspicions. He then fell to inspecting the rocks; and when George pointed out to him the broad and distant pasture he said in an absent way, 'Yes;' and turning round George found him with his eyes glued to the ground at his feet, and his mind in a deep reverie. George was vexed, and said somewhat warmly,

'Why Tom, the place is worth looking at now we are come to it, surely.'

Robinson made no direct reply.

'George' said he thoughtfully, 'how far have you got towards your thousand pounds?'

'Oh, Tom! don't ask me, don't remind me! How can I ever make it? No market within a thousand

miles of any place in this confounded country! Forced to boil down sheep into tallow, and sell them for the price of a wild duck! I have left my Susan, and I have lost her. Oh, why did you remind me?’

‘So much for the farming lay. Don’t you be down-hearted, there’s better cards in the pack than the five of spades; and the farther I go and the more I see of this country the surer I am. There is a good day coming for you and me. Listen George. When I shut my eyes for a moment now where I stand, and then open them, I’m in California.’

‘Dreaming?’

‘No, wide awake—wider than you are now. George, look at these hills; you could not tell them from the golden range of California. But that is not all; when you look into them you find they are made of the same stuff too—granite mica and quartz. Now don’t you be cross.’

‘No! no! why should I? Show me’ said George trying out of kind-heartedness to take an interest in this subject which had so often wearied him.

‘Well here are two of them; that great dark bit out there is mica, and all this that runs in a vein like is quartz. Quartz and mica are the natural home of gold, and some gold is to be found at home still, but the main of it has been washed out and scattered like seed all over the neighbouring clays. You see George the world is a thousand times older than most folks think, and water has been working upon gold thousands and thousands of years before ever a man stood upon the

earth, ay or a dog either Carlo, for as wise as you look squatting out there thinking of nothing and pretending to be thinking of everything.'

'Well, drop gold' said George, 'and tell me what this is' and he handed Robinson a small fossil.

Robinson eyed it with wonder and interest.

'Where on earth did you find this?'

'Hard by; what is it?'

'Plenty of these in California. What is it? Why I'll tell you: it is a pale old Joey.'

'You don't say so; looks like a shell.'

'Sit down a moment George, and let us look at it. He bids me drop gold and then goes and shows me a proof of gold that never deceived us out there.'

'You are mad. How can this be a sign of gold? I tell ye it is a shell.'

'And I tell you that where these things are found among mica quartz and granite, there gold is to be found if men have the wit the patience and the skill to look for it. I can't tell you why; the laws of gold puzzle deeper heads than mine, but so it is. I seem to smell gold all round me here.' And Robinson flushed all over, so powerfully did the great idea of gold seated here on his native throne grapple and agitate his mind.

'Tom' said the other doggedly, 'if there is as much gold on the ground of New South Wales as will make me a wedding-ring I'm a Dutchman;' and he got up calmly and jerked the pale old Joey a tremendous way into the valley.

This action put Robinson's blood up. 'George,'

cried he, springing up like fire and bringing his foot down sharp upon the rocky floor ‘IF I DON’T STAND UPON GOLD I’M D——D!’

And a wild but true inspiration seemed to be upon the man; a stranger could hardly have helped believing him, but George had heard a good deal of this, though the mania had never gone quite so far. He said quickly ‘Come, let us go down into the pasture.’

‘Not I’ replied Robinson; ‘come, George, prejudice is for babies, experience for men. Here is an unknown country with all the signs of gold thicker than ever. I have got a calabash, stay and try for gold in this gully; it looks to me just like the mouth of a purse.’

‘Not I.’

‘I will then.’

‘Why not? I don’t think you will find anything in it, but any way you will have a better chance when I am not by to spoil you. Luck is all against me. If I want rain comes drought; if I want sun look for a deluge, if there is money to be made by a thing I’m out of it, to be lost I’m in it; if I loved a vixen she’d drop into my arms like a medlar; I love an angel and that is why I shall never have her, never: from a game of marbles to the game of life I never had a grain of luck like other people. Leave me Tom and try if you can find gold; you will have a chance my poor fellow if unlucky George is not aside you.’

‘Leave you, George! not if I know it.’

‘You are to blame if you don’t. Turn you back on me as I did on you in England.’

'Never! I'd rather not find gold than part with honesty. There I'm coming let us go quick come, let us leave here.' And the two men left the road and turned their faces and their steps across the ravine.

During all this dialogue the men in the cave had strained both eyes and ears to comprehend the speakers. The distance was too great for them to catch all the words but this much was clear from the first that one of the men wished to stay on the spot for some purpose and the other to go on, but presently as the speakers warmed a word travelled down the breeze that made the four ruffians start and turn red with surprise and the next moment darken with anger and apprehension. The word came again and again; they all heard it, its open vowel gave it a sonorous ring; it seemed to fly farther than any other word the speaker uttered, or perhaps when he came to it he spoke it louder than smaller words, or the hearer's ears were watching for it.

The men interchanged terrible looks, and then they grasped their knives and watched their leader's eye for some deadly signal. Again and again the word 'g-o-l-d' came like an Æolian note into the secret cave, and each time eye sought eye and read the unlucky speaker's death-warrant there. But when George prevailed and the two men started for the valley, the men in the cave cast uncertain looks on one another, and he we have called Jem drew a long breath and said brutally yet with something of satisfaction, 'You have saved your bacon this time.' The voices now drew near and the men crouched close, for George and

Robinson passed within fifteen yards of them. They were talking now about matters connected with George’s business, for Robinson made a violent effort and dropped his favourite theme to oblige his comrade. They passed near the cave, and presently their backs were turned to it.

‘Good-bye my lads’ whispered Jem; ‘And curse you for making us lose a good half hour,’ muttered another of the gang. The words were scarce out of his mouth before a sudden rustle was heard and there was Carlo: he had pulled up in mid career and stood transfixed with astonishment, literally pointing the gang; it was but for a moment, he did not like the looks of the men at all; he gave a sharp bark that made George and Robinson turn quickly round, and then he went on hunting.

‘A kangaroo!’ shouted Robinson, ‘it must have got up near that bush; come and look, if it is we will hunt it down.’

George turned back with him, but on reflection he said ‘No! Tom, we have a long road to go, let us keep on if you please;’ and they once more turned their backs to the cave, whistled Carlo, and stepped briskly out towards the valley. A few yards before them was the brook I have already noticed, it was about three yards broad at this spot: however, Robinson, who was determined not to make George lose any more time, took the lead and giving himself the benefit of a run, cleared it like a buck: but as he was in the air his eye caught some object on this side

the brook, and making a little circle on the other side, he came back with ludicrous precipitancy, and jumping short landed with one foot on shore and one in the stream. George burst out laughing.

'Do you see this?' cried Robinson.

'Yes; somebody has been digging a hole here' said George very coolly.

'Come higher up' said Robinson all in a flutter, 'do you see this?'

'Yes; it is another hole.'

'It is: do you see this wet too?'

'I see there has been some water spilt by the brook side.'

'What kind of work has been done here? have they been digging potatoes farmer?'

'Don't be foolish Tom.'

'Is it any kind of work you know? Here is another trench dug.'

'No! it is nothing in my way, that is the truth.'

'But it is work the signs of which I know as well as you know a ploughed field from a turnpike-road.'

'Why, what is it then?'

'It is gold washing.'

'You don't say so, Tom.'

'This is gold washing as beginners practise it in California and Mexico and Peru, and wherever gold-dust is found. They have been working with a pan, they haven't got such a thing as a cradle in this country. Come lower down; this was yesterday's work, let us find to-day's.'

The two men now ran down the stream busy as dogs hunting an otter. A little lower down they found both banks of the stream pitted with holes about two feet deep and the sides drenched with water from it.

‘Well, if it is so you need not look so pale: why dear me how pale you are Tom!’

‘You would be pale’ gasped Tom ‘if you could see what a day this is for you and me, ay! and for all the world old England especially. George in a month there will be five thousand men working round this little spot. Ay! come,’ cried he, shouting wildly at the top of his voice, ‘there is plenty for all. GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! I have found it. I Tom Robinson, I’ve found it, and I grudge it to no man. I, a thief that was, make a present of it to its rightful owner and that is all the world. Here GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!’

Though George hardly understood his companion’s words he was carried away by the torrent of his enthusiasm, and even as Robinson spoke his cheeks in turn flushed and his eyes flashed, and he grasped his friend’s hands warmly, and cried ‘GOLD! GOLD! blessings on it if it takes me to Susan; GOLD! GOLD!’

The poor fellows’ triumph and friendly exultation lasted but a moment; the words were scarce out of Robinson’s mouth, when to his surprise George started from him, turned very pale, but at the same time lifted his iron shod stick high in the air and clenched his teeth with desperate resolution. Four men with shaggy beards and wild faces and murderous eyes were literally

upon them, each with a long glittering knife raised in the air.

At that fearful moment George learned the value of a friend that had seen adventure and crime ; rapid and fierce and unexpected as the attack was, Robinson was not caught off his guard. His hand went like lightning into his bosom, and the assailants in the very act of striking were met in the face by the long glistening barrels of a rifle revolver, while the cool wicked eye behind it showed them nothing was to be hoped in that quarter from flurry or haste or indecision.

The two men nearest the revolver started back, the other two neither recoiled nor advanced but merely hung fire. George made a movement to throw himself upon them ; but Robinson seized him fiercely by the arm—he said steadily but sternly, 'Keep cool young man, no running among their knives while they are four. Strike across me and I shall guard you till we have thinned 'em.

'Will you?' said Black Will, 'here pals!'

The four assailants came together like a fan for a moment and took a whisper from their leader. They then spread out like a fan and began to encircle their antagonists so as to attack on both sides at once.

'Back to the water George,' cried Robinson quickly, 'to the broad part here.'

Robinson calculated that the stream would protect his rear, and that safe he was content to wait and profit by the slightest error of his numerous assailants ; this how-

ever was to a certain degree a miscalculation, for the huge ruffian we have called Jem, sprang boldly across the stream higher up and prepared to attack the men behind the moment they should be engaged with his comrades. The others no sooner saw him in position than they rushed desperately upon George and Robinson in the form of a crescent, and as they came on Jem came flying knife in hand to plunge it into Robinson's back. As the front assailants neared them, true to his promise, Robinson fired across George, and the outside man received a bullet in his shoulder-blade, and turning round like a top fell upon his knees. Unluckily George wasted a blow at this man which sung idly over him, he dropping his head and losing his knife and his powers at the very moment. By this means Robinson the moment he had fired his pistol had no less than three assailants; one of these George struck behind the neck so furiously with a back-handed stroke of his iron-shod stick that he fell senseless at Robinson's feet. The other, met in front by the revolver, recoiled, but kept Robinson at bay while Jem sprang on him from the rear. This attack was the most dangerous of all; in fact neither Robinson nor George had time to defend themselves against him even if they had seen him, which they did not. Now as Jem was in the very act of making his spring from the other side of the brook, a spear glanced like a streak of light past the principal combatants and pierced Jem through and through the fleshy part of the thigh, and there stood Jacky at forty yards distance with the hand still raised from which the

spear had flown, and his emu-like eye glittering with the light of battle.

Jem instead of bounding clear over the stream fell heavily into the middle of it and lay writhing and floundering at George's mercy, who turning in alarm at the sound stood over him with his long deadly staff, whirling and swinging round his head in the air, while Robinson placed one foot firmly on the stunned man's right arm and threatened the leader Black Will with his pistol, and at the same moment with a wild and piercing yell Jacky came down in leaps like a kangaroo, his tomahawk flourished over his head, his features entirely changed, and the thirst of blood written upon every inch of him. Black Will was preparing to run away and leave his wounded companions, but at sight of the fleet savage he stood still and roared out for mercy.

'Quarter! quarter!' cried Black Will.

'Down on your knees!' cried Robinson in a terrible voice.

The man fell on his knees, and in that posture Jacky would certainly have knocked out his brains, but that Robinson pointed the pistol at his head and forbade him; and Carlo, who had arrived hastily at the sound of battle in great excitement but not with clear ideas, seeing Jacky, whom he always looked on as a wild animal opposed in some way to Robinson, seized him directly by the leg from behind and held him howling in a vice.

'Hold your cursed noise all of you,' roared Robinson. 'D'ye ask quarter?'

‘Quarter!’ cried Black Will.

‘Quarter!’ gurgled Jem.

‘Quarter!’ echoed more faintly the wounded man.

The other was insensible.

‘Then throw me your knives.’

The men hesitated.

‘Throw me them this instant or —’

They threw down their knives.

‘George take them and tie them up in your wipe.’

George took the knives and tied them up.

‘Now pull that big brute out of the water or he’ll drown himself.’

George and Jacky pulled Jem out of the water with the spear sticking in him ; the water was discoloured with his blood.

‘Pull the spear out of him!’

George pulled and Jem roared with pain, but the spear head would not come back through the wound ; then Jacky came up and broke the light shaft off close to the skin, and grasping the head drew the remainder through the wound forward, and grinned with a sense of superior wisdom.

By this time the man whom George had felled sat up on his beam ends winking and blinking and confused like a great owl at sunrise.

Then Robinson, who had never lost his presence of mind and had now recovered his sang-froid, made all four captives sit round together on the ground in one little lot, ‘while I show you the error of your ways,’ said he. ‘I could forgive a rascal but I hate a fool.

You thought to keep such a secret as this all to yourselves—you dunces—the very birds in the air would carry it; it never was kept secret in any land and never will. And you would spill blood sooner than your betters should know it—ye ninny-cum-poops! What the worse are you for our knowing it? If a thousand knew it to-day would that lower the price of gold a penny an ounce? No! All the harm they could do you would be this that some of them would show you where it lies thickest, and then you'd profit by it. You had better tie that leg of yours up; you have lost blood enough I should say by the look of you; haven't you got a wipe? here take mine—you deserve it don't you? No man's luck hurts his neighbour at this work; how clever you were! you have just pitched on the unlikeliest place in the whole gully, and you wanted to kill the man that would have taught you which are the likelier ones. I shall find ten times as much gold before the sun sets as you will find in a week by the side of that stream; why it hasn't been running above a thousand years or two I should say by the look of it; you have got plenty to learn you bloody-minded greenhorns! Now I'll tell you what it is,' continued Robinson getting angry about it, 'since you are for keeping dark what little you know. I'll keep you dark, and in ten minutes my pal here and the very nigger shall know more about gold-finding than you know, so you be off for I'm going to work, Come, march!'

'Where are we to go, mate?' said the leader sullenly.

‘Do you see that ridge about three miles west? well if we catch you on this side of it we will hang you like wild cats. On the other side of it do what you like, and try all you know; but this gully belongs to us now; you wanted to take something from us that did not belong to you—our blood, so now we take something from you that didn’t belong to us a minute or two ago. Come mizzle, and no more words or—’ and he pointed the tail of his discourse with his revolver.

The men rose and with sullen rueful downcast looks moved off in the direction of the boundary; but one remained behind, the man Jem.

‘Well!’

‘Captain I wish you would let me join in with you!’

‘What for?’

‘Well captain, you’ve lent me your wive and I think a deal of it, for it’s what I did not deserve; but that is not all. You are the best man—and I like to be under the best man if I must be under anybody.’

Robinson hesitated a moment.

‘Come here,’ said he. The man came and fronted him. ‘Look me in the face! now give me your hand—quick, no thinking about how!’ The man gave him his hand readily. Robinson looked into his eyes. ‘What is your name?’

‘Jem.’

‘Jem, we take you on trial.’

Jem’s late companions, and particularly Black Will who perfectly comprehended what was passing, turned

and hooted the deserter ; Jem whose ideas of repartee were primitive, turned and hooted them in reply.

While the men were retreating Robinson walked thoughtfully with his hands behind him backwards and forwards, like a great admiral on his quarter deck enemy to leeward. Every eye was upon him, and watched him in respectful inquiring silence.

"Knowledge is power;" this was the man now, the rest children.

'What tools have you?'

'There is a spade and trowel in that bush captain.'

'Fetch them George. Had'nt you a pan?'

'No captain? we used a calabash, he will find it lower down.'

George after a little search found all these objects, and brought them back.

'Now' cried Robinson, 'these greenhorns have been washing in a stream that runs now, but perhaps in the days of Noah was not a river at all; but you look at that old bed of a stream down out there: that was a much stronger stream than this in its day, and it ran for more than a hundred thousand years before it dried up.'

'How can you tell that' said George resuming some of his incredulity.

'I'll tell you! look at those monstrous stones in it here there and everywhere. It has been a powerful stream to carry such masses with it as that, and it has been running many thousand years, for see how deep it has eaten into its rocky sides here and there. That was a river my lads, and washed gold down for hundreds

of thousands of years before ever Adam stood on the earth.’

The men gave a hurrah, and George and Jacky prepared to run and find the treasure.

‘Stop,’ cried Robinson, ‘you are not at the gold yet. Can you tell in what parts of the channel it lies thick, and where there isn’t enough to pay the labour of washing it? Well I can, look at that bend where the round pebbles are collected so, there was a strong eddy there. Well under the ridge of that eddy is ten times as much gold lying as in the level parts. Stop a bit again, do you know how deep or how shallow it lies, do you think you can find it by the eye? Do you know what clays it sinks through as if they were a sieve, and what stops it like an iron door? Your quickest way is to take Captain Robinson’s time—and that is now.’

He snatched the spade, and giving full vent to the ardour he had so long suppressed with difficulty, plunged down a little declivity that led to the ancient stream, and drove his spade into its shingle the debris of centuries of centuries. George sprang after him his eyes gleaming with hope and agitation; the black followed in wonder and excitement, and the wounded Jem limped last, and unable through weakness to work seated himself with glowing eyes upon that ancient river’s bank.

‘Away with all this gravel and shingle, these are all new comers, the real bed of the stream is below all this, and we must get down to that.’

Trowel and spade and tomahawk went furiously to work, and soon cleared away the gravel from a surface

of three or four feet : beneath this they found a bed of grey clay.

'Let us wash that, captain,' said Jem eagerly.

'No ! Jem,' was the reply, 'that is the way novices waste their time. This grey clay is porous, too porous to hold gold, we must go deeper.'

Tomahawk spade and trowel went furiously to work again.

'Give me the spade,' said George, and he dug and shovelled out with herculean strength and amazing ardour ; his rheumatism was gone and nerves came back from that very hour. 'Here is a white clay.'

'Let me see it. Pipe-clay ! go no deeper George ; if you were to dig a hundred feet you would not find an ounce of gold below that.'

George rested on his spade.

'What are we to do then ? try somewhere else ?'

'Not till we have tried here first.'

'But you say there is nothing below this pipe-clay.'

'No more there is.'

'Well then.'

'But I don't say there is nothing above it !!!'

'Well but there is nothing much above it except the grey, without 'tis this small streak of brownish clay, but that is not an inch thick.'

'George in that inch lies all the gold we are likely to find ; if it is not there we have only to go elsewhere. Now while I get water you stick your spade in and cut the brown clay away from the white it lies on. Don't leave a spot of the brown sticking to the white, the lower part of the brown clay is the likeliest.'

A shower having fallen the day before, Robinson found water in a hole not far distant. He filled his calabash and returned; meantime George and Jacky had got together nearly a barrowful of the brown or rather chocolate-coloured clay, mixed slightly with the upper and lower strata the grey and white.

‘I want yon calabash, and George’s as well.’

Robinson filled George’s calabash two-thirds full of the stuff, and pouring some water upon it, said good-naturedly to Jem ‘There you may do the first washing if you like.’

‘Thank you captain’ said Jem, who proceeded instantly to stir and dissolve the clay and pour it carefully away as it dissolved. Jacky was sent for more water, and this when used as described, had left the clay reduced to about one-sixth of its original bulk.

‘Now captain’ cried Jem, in great excitement.

‘No it’s now captain yet,’ said Robinson; ‘is that the way you do pan-washing?’

He then took the calabash from Jem, and gave him Jacky’s calabash two-thirds full of clay to treat like the other, and this being done, he emptied the dry remains of one calabash into the other, and gave Jem a third lot to treat likewise. This done, you will observe he had in one calabash the results of three first washings, but now he trusted Jem no longer. He took the calabash and said, ‘you look faint, you are not fit to work, besides you have not got the right twist of the hand yet my lad; pour for me George.’ Robinson stirred and began to dissolve the three remainders, and every now

and then with an artful turn of the hand he sent a portion of the muddy liquid out of the vessel. At the end of this washing, there remained scarce more than a good handful of clay at the bottom. More water was poured on this. 'Now' said Robinson, 'we shall know this time, and if you see but one spot of yellow amongst it, we are all gentlemen and men of fortune.'

He dissolved the clay, and twisted and turned the vessel with great dexterity, and presently the whole of the clay was liquefied.

'No' said Robinson, 'all your eyes upon it, and if I spill anything I ought to keep, you tell me.' He said this conceitedly but with evident agitation. He was now pouring away the dirty water with the utmost care, so that anything however small that might be heavier than clay should remain behind. Presently he paused and drew a long breath. He feared to decide so great a question: it was but for a moment; he began again to pour the dirty water away very slowly and carefully. Every eye was diving into the vessel. There was a dead silence!

Robinson poured with great care. There was now little more than a wine-glassful left.

DEAD SILENCE!

Suddenly a tremendous cry broke from all these silent figures at the same instant. A cry! it was a yell. I don't know what to compare it to: but imagine that a score of wolves had hunted a horse for two centuries up and down, round and round, sometimes losing a yard, sometimes gaining one on him, and at last, after

a thousand disappointments and fierce alternations of hope and despair, the horse had suddenly stumbled and the wild gluttons had pounced on him at last. Such a fierce yell of triumph burst from four human bosoms now.

‘Hurrah! we are the greatest men above ground. If a hundred emperors and kings died to-day, their places could be filled to-morrow; but the world could not do without us and our find. We are gentlemen—we are noblemen—we are whatever we like to be. Hurrah!’ cried Robinson.

‘Hurrah!’ cried George, ‘I see my Susan’s eyes in you, you beauty.’

‘Hurrah!’ whined Jem feebly, ‘let me see how much there is,’ and clutching the calabash he fainted at that moment from loss of blood, and fell forward insensible, his face in the vessel that held the gold, and his hands grasping it so tight that great force had to be used to separate them.

They lifted Jem and set him up again, and sprinkled water in his face. The man’s thick lip was cut by the side of the vessel, and more than one drop of blood had trickled down its sides, and mingled with the gold-dust.

No comment was made on this at the time. They were so busy.

‘There he’s coming to, and we’ve no time to waste nursing the sick. Work!’ and they sprang up on to the work again.

It was not what you have seen pass for work in Europe, it was men working themselves for once as they

make horses work for ever. Work? It was battle; it was humanity fighting and struggling with Nature for her prime treasure—(so esteemed). How they dug and scraped, and fought tooth, and spade, and nail, and trowel, and tomahawk for gold! Their shirts were wet through with sweat yet they felt no fatigue. Their trousers were sheets of clay yet they suffered no sense of dirt. The wounded man recovered a portion of his strength, and thirsting for gold brought feeble hands but indomitable ardour to the great cause. They dug, they scraped, they bowed their backs, and wrought with fury and inspiration unparalleled; and when the sun began to decline behind the hills, these four human mutes felt injured. They lifted their eyes a moment from the ground, and cast a fretful look at the great tranquil sun.

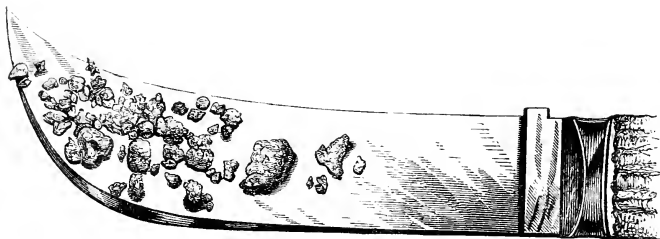
'Are you really going to set this afternoon the same as usual, when we need your services so?'

Would you know why that volkish yell of triumph? Would you see what sight so electrified those gloating eyes and panting bosoms? Would you realize that discovery, which in six months peopled that barren spot with thousands of men from all the civilized tribes upon earth, and in a few years must and will make despised Australia a queen among the nations—nations who must and will come with the best thing they have, wealth, talent, cunning, song, pencil, pen, tongue, arm, and lay them all at her feet for this one thing?

Would you behold this great discovery the same in appearance and magnitude as it met the eyes of the first

discoverers, picked with a knife from the bottom of a calabash, separated at last by human art and gravity's great law from the meaner dust it had lurked in for a million years.

Then turn your eyes hither, for here it is.



END OF VOL. II.

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